

# AINSLEE'S

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## BACCARAT

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### CHAPTER I.



W ought to go where there are no English families, where the children will hear nothing but French from morning until night, where they will play with French children and get the accent," John Courtney said to his wife; and she was readily acquiescent. She had a vague desire to see again her own country, which she had left when a child, and a rather less vague desire for novelty.

John Courtney had been married to Julie Courvoisier nine years. She was still under thirty, and although she had borne him two children, her figure retained its beauty, and her face its charm. Julie, if a thought frivolous, was nevertheless esteemed by her neighbors as a devoted wife and mother and a notable housekeeper. John boasted that his bills were under four pounds a week, his wife made her own dresses, and her little girl's frocks. Her window curtains, flower boxes and doorsteps were models for suburban Southampton.

She talked French sometimes to the children, but they did not acquire much facility in the language. That was one of the reasons why, when Jack was eight and approaching school age, his parents

thought a month or six weeks abroad might be of use. Boulogne and Dieppe were rejected as being too much frequented by English people.

Why they should have selected Cabourg-Dives, nobody ever knew; least of all Julie and John. It was one of those accidents, eventful, inexplicable, that are nevertheless of daily occurrence. Trouville had been negatived on account of its expense; Dinard because it was too aristocratic; Etretat had a stony beach, at Parame the bathing was dangerous. Who first mentioned Cabourg, John always forgot; but after the name had become familiar, first this one, and then the other, remembered or had heard, that the bathing was exquisite and wonderful, the hotel comfortable, and not too dear. Cabourg was near enough to Trouville for gayety, far enough from it for quiet. The journey was a little too complicated to tempt English people with their families, not sufficiently so to make it prohibitive to the Courtneys.

John wrote to engage rooms at the Grand Hotel; reserved two cabins on the steamer and prepared to do the thing in style. Julie had several new dresses, not all of them home-made; and white flannels for Jack, blue serges and white muslins for little Eugenie, were bought with a comparatively lavish hand. They

decided to start on the twenty-ninth of July. On the twenty-seventh John came home with a long face, and bad news.

Julie, watching for him gayly at the window, and running into the hall to relieve him of hat and stick, noted his expression at once:

"What is it; you have heard something? Is it that Cabourg is unhealthy for the children? The cabins, they have been taken; the steamer, she will not go? What is it, my John?"

She was always foreign in her expressions, in her caressing little ways, in her impulsiveness and want of calm. John liked all her ways, all her expressions, everything she said and did; and this attitude of his made their lives very happy together.

"Cabourg is all right, and nothing has happened to the steamer or the cabins. But the most important client I've got, my bread-and-butter client, I call him, for he has provided me with it for many years, is coming home from Australia, and he wants me to meet him in London on the fourth of August."

"Oh, John, do not say we cannot go; it is too sad; it cannot be, I have so well arranged—oh, John!—and the little ones, they have so much looked forward to it!"

She was almost a child herself, tears were near the surface of her pretty eyes, and in her excited voice she cried: "You cannot say we shall not go. Oh, we must! it would be too bad, it is impossible—I cannot bear it."

"Tush! don't cry out before you are hurt. I never said you were not to go," he said, good-naturedly.

She followed him upstairs, hung about him while he changed his clothes, was full of endearments and fondlings. They never palled upon him. John was provincial and stiff, and undemonstrative, and Julie was everything that was different. Perhaps it was the difference between them that had attracted him, that held him. But everything she did was right in his eyes, and to deny her, or fail to indulge her whim or wishes, had always been impossible to him. And in justice to Julie it must be admitted they were always very mild little

whims and wishes, concerning themselves with new lamp shades perhaps, or a *crêpe de chine* shawl with fringes, a fan with Louis Seize figures on it, or such womanly desires. But now she had set her heart on the Cabourg trip, and Tom Jarvis was coming over from Australia! John wanted to gratify his wife, but he had his business to think of, and his son's future, and it seemed to him Mr. Jarvis was essential to both.

"Jarvis does not arrive until the fourth. I could run over with you, stay a couple of days to see that you were comfortable, and be back in time to meet him," he said hesitatingly, when at length he had got rid of the stains of the busy day and found himself clean and cool in his evening clothes. "The question is, do you think you would be all right there without me, for a fortnight or three weeks? I can't get through my business under that time and it might take more. But, anyway, there is no doubt I should be free to fetch you at the end of August or the beginning of September. What do you say to that?"

What he had expected her to say, perhaps, was, that she could not be happy without him; that they had never been separated, and she did not want them to be, and that if he could not stay with them she would wait until next year to perfect Jack's French. But what she did say, was to call him a "*cheri*" and her "own dear John," and to protest that she would be quite happy with the children, and he was not to mind about them, and it was good and sweet and adorable of him to let them go, and she longed to see her own dear land once again.

Julie Courvoisier had not seen her "own dear land" since she was fifteen. The Baron de Courvoisier, who boasted that he was an Englishman on the maternal side of his family, and connected with the Cavendishes, and on the male side the last of his great race, had been a well-known character at every gambling center in Europe. He was very poor, and very near the end of his resources, when John met him at Boulogne, and he was not above borrowing

a few pounds from his new acquaintance. But he was an aristocratic-looking gentleman withal. His long gray mustachios, the red ribbon in his buttonhole, his easy loquacity, impressed the young provincial lawyer. And after John had been honored by an invitation to the apartment where the Baron and Madame la Baronne in scrupulous cleanliness and some dignity, eked out their *soupe maigre*, with *salade de legumes*, he constituted himself legal adviser to the family. The post was not an onerous one for a couple of years, until a black-edged envelope, announcing the death of madame, was followed by an intimation that the baron was at Dover, at the point of death, also, and wanted to see his English friend.

John had heard that his French friends had a daughter who was being educated at a convent school in Liège. He found her now with her dying father.

From the first John was more interested in Julie's white teeth and dimples, brown, dancing eyes, and pretty smiles, the piquancy of her little foreign way, and her archness, than he was in a claim the baron wished to make to a share in the estate of the late Sir William Cavendish, whose intestacy was already agitating the courts.

Very soon he discovered that the Cavendish and Courvoisier connection had no marriage certificate to prove it. But he did not tell the old man what he knew. He brought father and daughter to Southampton. He saw they wanted for nothing.

A few days after her father's death, finding Julie forlorn and pathetic in her black dress and helplessness, practically without a friend in the world but himself, he somewhat haltingly and stiffly asked her if she could make up her mind to marry him. Before he had finished speaking she was sobbing in his arms. She had been so "*triste*" and knew not what to do, and she would love him; and be, oh! so good, and no, trouble! For she was lonely, and if he had not asked her to marry him she must go back to the convent, or teach, she, who was so young.

The love that was latent, and awkward and shy, threw down great roots while she clung to him sobbing, grateful to him for helping her out of her difficulties. She was almost a child, barely eighteen. He made no vows, but as he held her slender figure in his arms, as shyly, reverentially almost, his lips touched her hair, he knew his life was hers henceforth. The man's soul was great enough for love, and Julie flooded it.

It had not grown less with the years. There was much of the perpetual child about Julie, although she developed surprisingly housewifely qualities, deftness in needlework, thrift, and a love of neatness and order. But her gayety never failed her, nor her lightness of spirit, and if, as his friends said, John spoiled her, he had this excuse, that he owed to her an ideal home, wherein children played and prattled, and the mother laughed and sang, and all was sweet and orderly, with love enough to smooth over inevitable frets or small petulances.

They had no troubles in their married life until the Cabourg holiday had begun.

The bad journey with which it started was prophetic. Many times in the days that came John thought of the omen of that stormy crossing.

It was a very rough and very prolonged passage, the cabin windows compulsorily closed. Julie proved the worst of travelers; sick, nervous and easily exhausted. John thought it best they should sleep one night at Havre.

It was two o'clock the following day before the Trouville steamer put out to sea. All the interval had been spent in investigating alternate routes, trying to raise Julie's drooping spirits.

And when the wretched three-quarters of an hour between Havre and Trouville had been got over, he reaped his reward. She rapidly recovered, and soon was as excited as the children, in the train that took them along the Normandy coast, winding slowly through woods and valleys, then climbing the steep gradient of green-clad hills. Between, they saw their enemy the sea, turned to gray grandeur, and illimita-

ble distance. Presently they stopped at Villar, the first of the towns with their feet in the sea, and their heads in the greenery, that divide the coast between them. Then came Houlgate. Julie, the children, even John, wished it had been Houlgate they had selected, so beautiful and peaceful it looked as it slumbered on the sands amid its trees. But the very next station was Cabourg! They had little time to regret Houlgate; for here they were!

There was little green at Cabourg. The faces fell as they read the name, as they realized that for the first time since they had left Trouville there was no scenery, no verdure-clad hills—that all was flat and bare and unlovely.

The disillusionment of Cabourg lasted through all John's short stay. Cabourg was just a circular row of houses and hotels, an esplanade, the sea. There was nothing about it to excite, or hold the imagination; there seemed no breadth nor depth in it for tragedy. Behind the circular sweep of building lay only a mean village, and then the station, amid flat building land, with boards announcing they were a *louer*. Nothing could be more dull and unattractive.

But now they were here, Julie would not let John see her disappointment. She told him she was sure they would be very happy, the sands were magnificent, broad and yellow and sunny. She liked her rooms, her bedroom that overlooked the sea, and the children's on the opposite side of the corridor that gave on to the garden and tennis court of the hotel. She did not want John to go away and think they would not enjoy this holiday that they had planned with such anticipation, that would cost them so much more money than their English holidays. So she found the air good, and the food good, and the beds good; all to please John.

And gradually, under the influence of her determined optimism, the children began to run about wildly, and to picture unheard-of pleasures; and John, reassured, began to set about doing what he could, in the short time before him, to insure her the attentions of the

manager and the staff, to secure her a table by the window for her meals, to get a subscription for her and the children for the Casino, even to go down to the bathhouses and buy two dozen bathing tickets for them.

"Good-by, my little John; you have been good, you have been sweet; you will come back to us so soon that Mr. Jarvis leaves—that horrid Mr. Jarvis!" She pouted at his name.

"Well, have a good time and take care of yourself and the children. Now, good-by to you all, and—and God bless you, my dear."

John was not demonstrative, but he took a last embrace of his wife with rather more feeling than was common to him in public. It was the first time they had been separated. There was no one that knew him at Cabourg station, and he kept his head out of the carriage window as long as the white figure and the handkerchief she waved in farewell to him were in sight.

Already, walking back from the station, she missed him; her heart sank at the prospect of the weeks before her in this dull, ugly town. She had hardly realized when she had clapped her hands and capered and reveled in the prospect of her novel jaunt, that she would have no one to talk to but Marie and the children—that John would not be there.

She had leaned on him during all the short years of their married life, as before she had leaned on the teachers, or the head of the class or the Mother Superior, or anybody. Notwithstanding her twenty-eight years she had not yet learned to stand alone.

Now, this strange holiday began by her dining alone at that table by the window which John had secured, by her wandering into the spare, empty drawing room alone, to look at the papers, by her venturing alone into the gayly lighted Casino, and coming out at the end of ten minutes, because she was suddenly shy or ashamed, or frightened at her solitude in the midst of the crowd. At nine-thirty she was glad of Marie's company, as she undressed and went to bed.

It was not so bad in the mornings.



Julie sat on the sands with the children, and watched them build their castles. She was a good swimmer, and went into the sea with them afterward. She had breakfast with them, and rested, when Cabourg rested, in the early forenoon. But then the long hours of the afternoon—with no John to whose home-coming she could look forward, the solitary dinner, and the long hours of the evening—began to depress her. So passed the first two or three days.

The Grand Hotel de Cabourg, the Casino, and many of the villas and dependencies belonged to two brothers, the Messieurs Bertrand. One of them was mayor of Cabourg.

The interests of the brothers and the town were identical. That people should come, should stay, should come again and bring their friends, was essential to the growth and the prosperity of the little seaport. And hitherto it had lacked the English. It would be a pity if Madame Courtney went back and reported badly of her holiday. Yet it was easy to see she was bored; the chambermaid heard it through her nurse, and so it filtered through to them.

It certainly seemed a pity that the pretty "*Anglaise*" should bore herself. But the other visitors at the hotel were there with their wives and families, or with their lady friends, and madame was alone, and no doubt felt isolated in the midst of the gayeties. For Cabourg was gay, there was no doubt about that; gayety was the end to which everyone in authority worked loyally. There were Chinese lantern fêtes, and battles of flowers, there were fancy dress balls and cotillions, there were children's parties and paper chases. Also there were pigeon shooting and horse racing, and always the vicinity of Trouville and Deauville with the Grand Prix, and plenty of high play at the various neighboring casinos.

That very evening Monsieur Bertrand, the one who was mayor of Cabourg, and a personage in his way, spoke to Julie, as she was hesitating between a solitary walk and looking on for half an hour at the *petits chevaux*

in the Casino—said good-evening to her as she stood in the hall, and asked her if she was going to the dance to-night; if she liked Cabourg, and amused herself here. She had already wondered who he was, this short and prominent Frenchman, who was always surrounded with friends and acquaintances, to whom everyone talked, and who appeared so popular. She was delighted to be addressed by him, she smiled and dimpled at him, charming him with her friendliness and pretty gestures, and exaggerated sadness. She was dull, she was unhappy, she had left so good a husband, and now she was all so alone, and nobody did talk to her, and she loved to talk; that was what she told him.

"But how well madame speaks French," he exclaimed, in surprise.

"But I am French! I was fifteen years old before I ever saw England," she exclaimed.

Finally Monsieur Bertrand heard that she was the daughter of Jules Courvoisier!

Monsieur Bertrand, who had a share in the Casino at Aix les Bains, as well as the one at Cabourg, remembered perfectly Monsieur le Baron, her father. He even recalled having seen him once in Spa with his little girl. And so the little girl had grown up, and had married an Englishman! Amazing! It seemed like yesterday that he had seen them.

There was a lady at Cabourg with Monsieur Bertrand; he presented her to Julie, and madame, it appeared, also remembered Monsieur le Baron de Courvoisier. The very next afternoon Julie drove with them in their automobile to the Deauville races, and felt she was at last beginning to enjoy herself. Her natural gayety bubbled up again quickly with her new friends. The Bertrands thought it was absurd that Julie should be bored at Cabourg.

The Baron d'Avril joined them at the races; he was presented to her, and he, too, found her quite agreeable. He had his own automobile, and he begged that she would drive back with him, instead of making a third with the Bertrands.

But an automobile is not very conducive to conversation, and their acquaintance made little progress during the drive. Later, after dinner, they met again.

Naturally he stopped to talk once more to that pretty little woman, who, as Bertrand had told him, was a daughter of the Baron de Courvoisier, whom he remembered ten years ago at Monte Carlo and Ostend. She was so glad of companionship; she was so gay and friendly. She was alone. The baron had no hesitation presently in asking her to go with him into the club. He had come to Cabourg to play baccarat. For the rest—well, the baron liked a pretty woman as well as most men. But it was early in the evening, and they would play a little now.

The reading room, for that was what was inscribed over the door, seemed a dull-looking place to Julie. It had no temptation, no danger, no attraction for her. No one was talking, a few people sat about reading and writing, and that was all.

"What for you bring me here?" she asked, gayly; "it is dull, the air is bad—close."

They had strolled past the *petits chevaux*, the unfriendly French mothers with their needlework and subdued daughters.

"Ah! but we must pass through here to get to the club," he said. "The other way is longer."

It seems absurd, but she did not realize where he was taking her. Baccarat was an unknown amusement to her. "Gambling" was a word she had forgotten or never heard. The convent had shielded her youth, her mother had concealed from her the knowledge of her father's habits, suffering rather the pangs of her starved maternity. John had guarded her adolescence. Her ignorance was complete.

There was a leather double door at one end of the reading room. It was discreetly shut and guarded; an attendant, seated at a table, acted Cerberus. But he rose deferentially to allow the baron and his lady to pass.

The Baron d'Avril had a brown mustache, and good-natured, sleepy, blue

eyes. He was inclined to be stout, although his height carried it off. He wore a tiny red wheel of ribbon in his buttonhole, and his baronne was stately, exclusive, and very charitable. They were a model couple, but the baron traveled much for his health. At Pau and at Aix, at Monte Carlo and at Trouville, he shot pigeons, and played *trente et quarante*, or baccarat, and even "pokaire," but always with discretion, and the preservation of his dignity.

It seemed to Julie that because Monsieur Bertrand had known her father—because the Baron d'Avril had known her father, she was suddenly among friends. Julie had acquired English habits and modes of thought. The baron, however, who looked at her readiness to accompany him from his own point of view, was incredulous at hearing that the daughter of Courvoisier had never even seen baccarat played; incredulous, too, perhaps, of her innocence, unworldliness, of all that her life with John had preserved to her.

She was curious, interested, eager as a child, when she had entered the room, and saw the line of men and women, three deep round each of the tables, under the glare of the lamps, heard the cry of the croupiers: "The bank is now open to bidders; who takes the bank? Once, twice, a hundred francs for the bank. Gentlemen make your bets," and was caught in the toils of the mysterious fascination of the scene. She asked eagerly for an explanation of this or that, question after childish question came volubly from her.

Might she play, too; could anybody play; would monsieur arrange it? It seemed so amusing. *Dieu!* what was a 'pass,' and why had that monsieur the cards again, and yet again?

If she had not been a young woman, graceful, piquant, pretty, Monsieur le Baron might have been too busy to enlighten her. But as it was, he told her everything about the game, and interspersed his explanations with compliments.

The gambling at first was of a comparatively mild and limited order. There were three tables, and at the one

where she stood they were playing *chemin de fer* with five-franc pieces. At the others, small banks of five, ten or fifteen louis were being held by first one and then another of the guests; the big punters had not yet arrived. Monsieur Bertrand generally appeared at such a juncture, playing for ten minutes or so with a bank of twenty-five louis, making himself always agreeable, and retaining his popularity. To-night, however, Monsieur Bertrand shook his head when the croupier looked his way; the rooms were very full, yet it seemed there was no banker for the middle table, and they, too, would have to resort to *chemin de fer*.

Then all at once there was a little bustle or stir in the room. Julie, who was standing gazing about her with those dancing brown eyes of hers, noting everything, interested in everything, pleased with everything in the strange, new scene, heard a quiet "Pardon, madame," was conscious for half a second of the regard of a pair of keen, black eyes, as some one passed quickly behind her, and said something in the ear of the croupier. The croupier called the *chef de parti*. Monsieur Diderot was new to the rooms, apparently; the keen, black eyes that had noted Julie's charming face belonged to Monsieur Diderot, with his waxed mustache, pointed and upturned, his black goatee, his assured manner. After that short colloquy between the croupier and the *chef de parti*, "Fifty louis in the bank, gentlemen," was announced in a loud voice, with the ordinary jargon of the tables. When everyone possible was seated, and the rest were standing behind them, and obvious interest was centered, it was explained that Monsieur Diderot would take a bank of a thousand francs, but that he would play with one tableau instead of two, a new variety of the game of baccarat, and that the minimum stakes were to be one louis. When the terms were agreed to, Monsieur Diderot took his place.

Seats had been found for Julie and the Baron d'Avril, and now, indeed, she began to find herself entangled in a drama of supreme, of vital interest.

She had changed a note into five round, red counters, had learned to push one over the line, and the very first deal became the proud and surprised possessor of two, where there had been one. Of course she did not quite realize why the man with the great quaint, wooden butter knife had slapped that little present over to her, and had even demurred about taking it, to the infinite amusement of one or two of the players, and the Baron d'Avril, and the impatience of the croupier, who thought she was protesting that he owed her more! It was not, of course, at first the actual gambling itself that attracted her. Money was not very important to her except as for its purchasing power. Money was John's affair. But she liked being with all these people, being one of them, doing what they did. She had been so dull and alone here until now. Everyone was in good humor that first evening, for the bank began by losing all the coups, and even a pass of three had not yet occurred in its favor.

Presently the "To me the hand," or "To you the hand," became "To madame the hand," and the butter knife handed her two cards. She took them up rather timidly, she hardly knew what she must do with them. It was the baron who looked over, and called out "nine" excitedly, and told her to throw them face upward on the table. After that it began to come easier and easier to her. She was so pleased at giving pleasure, and the cards she had seemed to give pleasure to everyone. She looked at them, and there was always a king, or a queen, and an eight or a nine. She understood now, and excitedly she threw them on the table and cried "eight" or "nine," as the case might be, and saw her pile of louis grow and increase quickly. It was the easiest thing in the world to win money at baccarat. And the crowd murmured a little applause: "Madame has luck. Madame plays well."

Presently there was a king and a five, and under her neighbor's prompting, Julie cried, in answer to the banker's mechanical "How many?" "A card."

He gave her a four, and again she

turned up the others, and cried "nine," and heard with exhilaration the laughing applause and the "Good draw." "Good drawing." "A pass of eleven against the bank!" It was very different from last night, and the night before, when she had been so homesick and lonely.

People left the other tables, and clustered around Julie. She felt she had done something very clever, to have a pass of eleven. She laughed and acknowledged the compliments, and handled the big pile of red counters always more boldly. When "End of the deal" was announced, and all the cards were shuffled up again, it was already eleven o'clock. Marie would be sitting up for her, she dared not stay longer.

But she had enjoyed the evening; there is something in heredity, perhaps. Anyway, the whole atmosphere had been congenial to her. Although she had reluctantly to leave the table now, she promised herself she would come back another time.

The baron, first carefully protecting his seat, went with her to the bank, and there, in exchange for her counters, they gave her not only her own note, but five others and three more louis, and she was altogether exhilarated and excited by her good fortune, and thought she had some special gift, or talent for play, and that soon—very soon—she would be able to write John that she had won enough money for a *dot* for little Eugenie, and that now he need not work so hard, and could be more at home with her. She was effervescent and bubbling with her success, and had none of the decorum of the experienced player.

The Baron d'Avril was pleased at her pleasure. He could not understand why she should retire so early. But the way she responded to his inquiry made it clear to him. Could it be that he misapprehended the position?

But it seemed to him he was in luck to-night; that the bank was in for a spell of ill luck. He did not want to miss another pass. He bowed over her hand when she bade him good-night, and thanked him for bringing her into this charmed circle. He did not suggest,

however, accompanying her back to the hotel; he contented himself with hoping they would meet again to-morrow. He was a player, not a man of gallantry, this Monsieur le Baron d'Avril, except, perhaps, incidentally.

It was nearly three o'clock in the morning when the table broke up. The Baron d'Avril and, indeed, the majority of the players, had won largely. Baccarat with one tableau came immediately into favor. There was much discussion about it, and Monsieur Diderot, who had held the bank all the evening, and had lost about eight thousand francs, was almost a popular hero. He took his sudden popularity, as he had taken his losses, with indifference. He explained to one or two who spoke to him, that he had seen baccarat played with one tableau at Wimereux, and that he himself thought it was a fairer game for the punters, and that it made the chances more even. For himself, he liked an even chance. He was a very quiet man, and spoke very little. It was difficult to classify him. While some were inclined to think he was a gentleman, gambling for pleasure, the others said he was a professional, and that he held the bank on behalf of an association, who found the capital. When he had answered a few questions almost monosyllabically, he slipped away with an inclusive "good-night." It was then that the argument about him and his "one tableau" reached its height.

The Baron d'Avril did not join in the personal discussion. It was self-evident to him that whether private or professional, whether he had been playing for amusement or gain, Monsieur Diderot was common, uninteresting. But the, at present, unlegalized new way of playing baccarat was profoundly interesting. The baron made calculations and compared them, and did not go to bed till past four, having completely forgotten Julie Courtney, and what he was pleased to consider his "success" with her.

Perhaps he would have remembered it in the morning. But in the morning, as it happened, he received a letter from the baronne. The baronne had selected

the very next day for her arrival at Villar. She wished her husband to join her there, and to carry out certain domestic instructions that she gave him. Of course, he must obey the summons, Madame la Baronne's orders were always carried out. If the baron did not leave Cabourg with alacrity, at least he left it with fortitude, with a nonchalant, wholly French shrug of the shoulders, and acceptance of destiny. Villar is only an hour's run from Cabourg. He calculated he could return by the end of the week. In the meantime, it was satisfactory to be taking with him nearly two thousand francs! If he had remembered Julie in the morning, it was not to an extent that disturbed him in the performance of his duty.

## CHAPTER II.

Julie wandered about rather disconsolately the day after her first introduction to the club. The Bertrands had motored to Caen for the day. The baron was nowhere to be seen.

The monotony of the hot, sandy beach, the wide-capped nurses, with their wizened, dark-skinned French babies, the rattle with which the sweetmeat sellers announced their approach, the babel of mothers and children, tortured the nerves that had been unstrung by the excitement of the previous evening. It was almost time for lunch before she had made up her mind to bathe. The crawling sea, with its waveless, slow, incoming tide was untempting; but when at length she found herself out of her depth, the warm salt buoyancy soon exhilarated her; she swam on and on, until she had forgotten her boredom, her rasped nerves, the monotonous morning, and the heat of the summer noon.

It was strange that when, happy and cool in her clinging bathing dress, she emerged from the sea, she should have almost run into the arms of Monsieur Diderot, the banker whose advent last night had been the signal for her exciting hour, and to whom she owed her large winnings and that wonderful series

of cards. For she was still a little confused as to the details of the play. She only knew it was this monsieur who had given her the eights and nines that had taken all the money. Of course she blushed when she saw him standing so near the encroaching sea. She was at once conscious of her bare feet and clinging gown. He raised his hat immediately, for the blush did not escape him. He did not recollect her, but it was evident she knew him. He had an eye, this Monsieur Diderot. From beneath her close, red bathing cap escaped black tendrils of hair, which meandered over a white forehead, above brown, bewitching eyes. The mantling color in her cheeks was less red than the scarlet softness of her lips. She could not but smile in answer to his greeting, when the maid hurriedly brought her *peignoir*. The piquant face, that dimpled as it smiled, and showed the even gleam of her teeth, was set on a slender pillar of white neck. Monsieur Diderot deliberately turned round to watch her graceful rush to her bathing machine. Her ankles were thin; her limbs the perfection of form.

It was only his second day in Cabourg, but he began to think it was well he had come. He waited about the beach and the esplanade, with the *Petit Journal*, and his cigarette, comfortable in his light shirt and straw hat, notwithstanding the heat, until he saw her come out of her dressing room.

Now he remembered her. It was she who was with the Baron d'Avril last night. But the Baron d'Avril had left Cabourg that morning; he could make no mistake, perhaps, in addressing her. But, although he turned his steps so that he met her face to face, he had no opportunity for more than the recognition she gave him. A boy and girl rushed up to her with:

"Mother, we're waiting lunch for you."

"Mother, what a long time you were in the water; we thought you were going to swim back to England." She bent her head to them, and answered them, and with one on either side she passed into the hotel.

It was later on in the day, when, in the Casino, just as he was passing into the rooms, he saw her again. She was watching the horses go round, and leaning over to place a coin on a number. She must already have learned something of the pleasures of play. And this afternoon, in the Casino, many of the players of last night had recognized and bowed to her; she no longer felt solitary and isolated. She looked charming in her simple, white frock, with the red band that drew attention to her small waist, with the wide hat that made her face small and childlike under its crown of red cherries.

"Madame is superstitious about numbers?" Diderot asked, after he had stood beside her a moment or two, noting that it was on the eight or nine she staked always her ten centimes. She turned to him quite frankly:

"Oh! Yes! I think they are my lucky ones," she said. "See, eight has turned up twice already." She was not startled by his speaking to her, she was glad. Last night it seemed everyone had spoken to everyone in the baccarat room; and this Monsieur Diderot was to her, at least, the hero of the occasion. She was glad, almost proud, that he spoke to her.

"Well, I will follow you." He threw down a franc on the number she had chosen, and together they watched, she with excitement, he with growing interest in her, while the painted iron horses, with their jockeys, first raced, and then crawled, and finally jerked, their way round the machine.

"It is—— Yes! I am sure—what do you think of it—an eight again! That is three times! Oh! we have won! I am so glad, I'm so glad you followed my luck."

She was really pretty in her excitement. The Belgian, Monsieur Diderot was a Belgian, said to himself that if he had been the Baron d'Avril he would not have left Cabourg, no, not even at the call of any number of baronnes.

He offered Julie his stake. He said it really belonged to her, he had only put it on for her. But, of course, she

replied that it was absurd. She blushed, and dimpled, and refused with animation, and a little gesticulation. He spoke English to her, he was proud of his English, and from one topic they passed to another, moving gradually away from the tables, as he persuaded her it was unwise to tempt fortune for yet a fourth time. For his part, he thought, it was the turn of one of the earlier numbers. When from the distance they heard the croupier call "two," she was quite astonished at his cleverness, and wished she had taken advantage of it.

"Madame had great good fortune also at baccarat last night? It is surprising madame is so lucky at cards!" The implication, the compliment, escaped her.

"It was the first time I had played," she answered, a little shyly, but eagerly, too. She wanted to talk about it. Julie always wanted to talk.

"You must go on! That is the way to play, always to go on, when one is in luck. But you must not break the bank!"

He smiled at her. He was a tall man, dark skinned, with hard eyes, and an inscrutable expression. He might have been any age from twenty-five to forty. When he smiled he showed good teeth; but he was a man who smiled seldom, and with the lips only.

"You must not break the bank," he said again.

"Did you lose? I am sorry you lost," she answered, quickly, in her impulsive way. "I thought it was so good of you to sit there all the time, dealing for us. It must have made you very tired; I am sorry if you lost, too; I did not know if that was all your money that the croupier had in front of him. I wondered why you said always 'pay.'" She looked at him sympathetically, with soft eyes. "Did you play long after I left?" She was glad to detain him, and talk about baccarat.

"Yes! Very long; they did not want me to get up. I played until three!"

"Ah! but that was a long time. And you lost all the time?"

"Yes, all the time. But it is of no consequence."

"I should not like to win always!"



"No? But madame will always be winning!"

Her blushes came so readily.

"But it must make one feel uncomfortable to win always!" she persisted. She ignored the compliment.

"You may 'risk' it, madame," he said again.

He held the leather doors open for her. She had not meant to play baccarat again this afternoon. She hung back a little; but as he waited, saying nothing more, she passed through with him.

"Perhaps I have forgotten how to play. Yesterday the Baron d'Avril was helping me; but to-day I have not seen him," she said, perhaps a trifle coquettishly.

"You have known Monsieur le Baron a long time?"

Monsieur Diderot was quite anxious for the answer. Julie puzzled him a little; she presented a type that was new to him, with her French piquancy, her English shyness, her readiness to talk, her unreadiness at compliments. He also knew that the Baron d'Avril was not a man of gallantry; it was part of Monsieur Diderot's method to know everything about the frequenters of gambling rooms. Julie explained immediately her short accidental acquaintance with the baron, her drive with the Bertrands, and that the Bertrands had known her father.

Of course Monsieur Diderot had also known Jules Courvoisier; he was quite startled to hear that this was his daughter! Of all the people who had claimed acquaintance with that dead gambler, it was indeed Monsieur Diderot who could do so with most truth. All through the last days of her father's fight with chance, at Boulogne, and later on, at Aix, Leon Diderot had watched him, noted his decadence, and been responsible, in fact, for that very incident, now recalled, perhaps, with some compunction, which had closed both Casinos to the baron, and driven the poor old ruined gamester to Dover and the offices of John Courtney.

So this was Jules Courvoisier's daughter! His interest in her was ac-

centuated, not diminished, by the knowledge. Dreams, for even Leon Diderot could dream, became tangible when he looked upon the daughter of the Baron de Courvoisier, and thought of that *salon*, or club, which he would open one day in Paris, when all the players from England, and from Italy, as well as from Belgium, would come to play, and when the central figure, with just Julie's grace and beauty and bloom, would preside over the establishment, and add her attractions to that of the green cloth.

Pouf! and the dream was gone.

They were in the club, and here were all the faces of yesterday, eager for his coming, tired of the small banks, the petty stakes, the tedious *chemin de fer*. A nod to the croupier.

"Ten thousand francs in the bank. Once, twice, the bank is sold at ten thousand francs!"

He took his seat, but did not forget to place Julie at his side, to order "a little bank for madame," to call for the money changer, and see that she had counters with which to stake. Leon Diderot could play two games at once, if necessary. As for Julie, all her outlook had been provincialized and dulled in the years of her marriage, but heredity is stronger than circumstance, and here soon, extraordinarily soon, she found herself at home. Quickly she learned the value of each coup she played, marked the cards, and intelligently gathered a "system" from the courtesan who stood behind her.

Cabourg-Dives is not like Monte Carlo, or even Ostend. Everything there is on a small, a limited scale. The players, meeting every day, twice a day, for a whole month—it is a short season place, and August its only harvest—are as a little family party. Everybody knows everybody, and is interested in the other's fortunes. Julie was pointed out as the lady who held the cards when there was a pass of eleven against the bank!

When the croupier shoveled over to her the cards this afternoon, the "To madame the hand" was followed by everyone increasing his or her stake.

At first she was again fortunate. But

the big run of this afternoon was against the punters. Julie, with her newly learned system to guide her, kept on doubling and redoubling her stake. At first, too, she was almost pleased when "poor Monsieur Diderot" had a little luck, for she realized now that whatever the croupier shoveled in was for him. But "to the bank," "eight to the bank," "nine to the bank," even with her sympathy for Monsieur Diderot, began to fall on her ears with an unpleasant sound, as her first five louis were swept away, and then another five, and very quickly all that she had gained the previous evening.

When she had nothing left in her purse, she hesitated, and was about to give up; but Monsieur Diderot, who had eyes apparently on both sides of his head, paused in his quiet dealing to ask her why she would leave so soon. When she explained that she had no more money with her, he told her that did not matter, and she was to remain where she was for the moment. When the cards were being reshuffled he called the *chef des jeux*, and gave him a word of instruction. Then some one at the back of her asked Julie what money she wanted. Shortly, and always quietly, Monsieur Diderot explained to her that she could have whatever she wanted from the bank. She could pay it that evening, or to-morrow; it was absurd to leave off playing just now without giving herself a chance of recompensing her losses. Monsieur Diderot said to her:

"You win it all back if there is a pass against the bank."

And sure enough, the bank lost five successive deals.

When they left off that afternoon she was able to reimburse the bank; she had even recovered something of her earlier losses.

There was fine soil for the virus of gaming in Julie's veins, although it was not all at once that the fever showed itself. She would have left off playing, perhaps, after the fright she had had that afternoon, when she had lost all she had with her, and had been induced to borrow from the bank. She told Monsieur Diderot, as he walked

back with her to the hotel, that she should play no more. He did not combat her decision.

But after dinner he met her, by chance, on her way to her room, and asked her, as she had decided not to play again that evening, whether she would not take a turn with him on the front. It had been a hot day, but now the air was beautiful; surely it was too early for her to retire, she would not be able to sleep! And, indeed, it was absurd to go to bed at nine o'clock! She bade him wait, while she fetched a wrap; it is possible that she told Marie not to sit up for her, she could not be sure what time she would come in from her walk! She was femininely disingenuous with herself!

There were hundreds of people walking up and down in front of the brilliantly lighted hotels; so many, that they jostled against Monsieur Diderot and Julie. A band of Neapolitan singers was attracting the crowd, and making the throng so great in just that one place; it was unpleasant to be so surrounded.

They walked on a little, away from the lights and the people, to where, almost alone, they leaned against the low stone parapet, and saw the sea and wet sand glisten in the moonlight. Vaguely now from the distance the soft summer wind wafted to them the dim tinkle of the mandolins.

Leon Diderot could not talk sentiment, but even he could feel something of the charm of their comparative isolation. His tepid blood warmed a little, and characteristically he began to talk baccarat. He told Julie stories of banks that had been broken, coups that had been made, extraordinary runs that had occurred. The moon and the sea and wet sands attuned him to romance, and it was the romance of gaming that he gave her. She drank it in; that little fever, already begun, was acute enough even now to make her thirsty. Why should it not be that she had, indeed, the lucky hand? Her father had been always unfortunate, but it might be that she would win back all he had lost. John had taken her without *dot*, but her

*dot* was here, at the gaming tables. There it was her father had left it, it was from there she would gain it back for John and for his children.

Something of this she conveyed to Leon Diderot; not much about John or the children, but about her feeling that she would gain back all her father had lost. He said it was possible, more than possible. He owned he had thought it a great pity when she told him she would play no more, for, if he were any judge, she was just one of the few who had a natural instinct for it. Of course there were chances for and against winning. It was courage that was needed, always courage; so that when the moment came, the inevitable moment of luck, the gambler should stake everything; should not hesitate nor fear, but seize with both hands the golden opportunity; it appeared to Monsieur Diderot that Julie had just the sort of courage needed!

Much more of the same kind did he tell Julie as they found their way back to the Casino, much more to which she listened with absorbed interest. The music had ceased, the crowd on the esplanade had dispersed. Only outside the door of the club stood a little string of cabs and motors, telling that the gamblers had assembled, or were assembling, waiting for the leviathan to make a large bank for them. They made room for him, as, with Julie always by his side, he passed through the doors, from the quiet of the moon, to the glare of the lamps, and the heat, and the green marked table.

This evening again the bank won. But Julie borrowed from the bank with smaller misgiving. Her heart fell a little when the twenty-five louis melted away so quickly. The second twenty-five, although she husbanded them, and played more carefully, and gradually diminished her stakes, were half gone before the play ended. Long before that moment Julie had become completely inoculated. Not even her father could have been more eager than she counting, and staking, and waiting for a pass. All the sparkling of her pretty eyes, all the smiling of her pretty mouth,

even the dimples, seemed changed and hardened by her absorption. Her fluctuating fortunes made the hours short in that crowded room, which was close and hot with the panting breath of greed, its air infectious, breathed again and again, poisonous. Julie had red spots on either cheek, the small hands changed their form, now they only knew how to hold, to clutch and swoop. The hours seemed to fly.

It was past two when she got to bed that night, to lie awake with beating heart and confused brain, trying to recall how it was the system she had learned had failed, where it was that she had made mistakes, calculating again and again how much she had lost, how she could arrange to pay the amount, and still have sufficient for her hotel bill, resolving desperately that if to-morrow she could only get her money back, only leave off as she had begun, she would never, never play again.

She began to hate Monsieur Diderot. She wished he had not spoken to her in the Casino. She wished she had not walked with him on the esplanade. He had made her play, he had won all her money. His sallow face and hard, black eyes rose before her in the darkness. Yes, she felt, she knew, she hated him. She would not speak to him again. But she could not go into the rooms alone, and she *must* make one more effort to recoup herself; for all her money was gone. It was John's money; she must, she must get John's money back.

Monsieur Diderot knew the secret of how to win—all those stories he had told her were of people who won fortunes. In a few hours she would see him; after all, it was necessary that she should speak to him again. She would make him tell her, she had not asked him questions enough as to what they had done, on what systems they had played, those people who had made fortunes. Her head ached, and she could not sleep, and always she heard the voices of the croupiers: "Eight to the bank, the bank wins. Make your bets. Nine to the bank;" and saw before her fevered eyes the threes and fours of the punters, the eights and the nines of the

bank. They grew dimmer, and more confused—phantasmagoria that changed as she drifted into uneasy slumber.

She was suddenly aroused by real voices. Through the thin partition she heard them distinctly, words and laughter.

She changed her room in the morning, the airy front room that John had selected for her. The manager of this French seaside hotel did not quite understand her confused explanation, did not quite realize of what she was complaining. Madame played baccarat, sat up in the rooms until two in the morning, and madame wanted to change her room because she heard people talking, because she could not go to sleep. He shrugged his shoulders, he did not understand. But of course he wished to please all his clients; it was easy to find her different quarters.

She won largely the day she changed her room; won all she had lost and more besides, and could have kept her vows, the promises she had made to herself. But if the change of room had brought her luck, how stupid, she thought, how wrong, not to take advantage of it!

Monsieur Diderot became more congenial to her, more sympathetic as a companion, when, in the morning on the beach, in the evenings on the esplanade, going to and from the rooms, he encouraged or consoled with her, talked of her good or ill fortune, counseled her always with the counsel she wished to hear.

### CHAPTER III.

By the time the Baron d'Avril returned to Cabourg, free, as far as Madame la Baronne was concerned, to pursue his good fortune, either with the little *Anglaise*, as they still persisted in calling her, or at the green cloth, Julie Courtney had become a confirmed gambler. She always thought she would never play again if once she recouped herself, if once the money John had given her was safe. She always thought, when she was winning, that it was a pity to leave off when the luck

had turned, that now Genie's *dot* was coming to her, and all of her patrimony that her father had lost. She was different in no one way from any other incurable with the same disease.

Instead of the simple life she had led when she first came to Cabourg, the early coffee with the children, the long morning with them on the sands, bathing as the tide served, helping to build castles, chattering to them over her needlework, she rose late after her fevered nights, came down only in time for the twelve o'clock lunch, slept in the early forenoon, and watched the clock impatiently until she could play again.

By the time the Baron d'Avril returned to Cabourg she seemed one with the advertisement agents, and painted ladies, the barons, and simple messieurs with red ribbons, and red rosettes, and red and white buttons, whose unanimous idea of a seaside holiday, was to sit in an overcrowded, badly ventilated room, making calculations on little pieces of paper, staking their louis or five-louis pieces against the irresistible bank.

For it was a fact that the bank had become irresistible.

It was no wonder that Julie had now no pretty coquetties or smiles for the Baron d'Avril. She had lost all the money she had won, all the money she had brought with her, all the money John had given her for the hotel bill, and she owed a thousand francs at the bank. If it had not been for the encouragement, for the kindness, for the unremitting attentions of Monsieur Diderot she would have been hopeless, distracted! But always he had an argument, a suggestion, that brought back hope.

All the time that Julie did not spend at the tables was spent in his company. The baron did not find that his interest in her survived very vividly when he took his seat at the table that Saturday afternoon. Some one had chaffed him at having been "cut out," and, of course, that had annoyed him. Being a Frenchman, he had not explained that he had had nothing from Julie of which he could be deprived. But his self-esteem resented that she no longer responded

to his glances. He was ready to believe everything he heard. She had accepted the attention of the Belgian. She did not command his respect.

Something of her beauty was gone, it seemed. She was haggard from want of sleep, the tints of her complexion had yellowed a little. The fever had grown acute, her restless fingers played constantly with the counters, her eager eyes followed the cards. Her seat was at the right hand of the banker, it had become etiquette to leave it to her. She spoke to him now and again, as she exclaimed against the luck.

The bank had become irresistible.

The baron heard all around him stories of phenomenal runs, stories of the amount the bank had won, stories of colossal losses. The sums mentioned, appalling for Cabourg, where respectable Parisian middle-class people had hitherto ventured only their hundred francs or so, were not so large in the ears of the Baron d'Avril, who was accustomed to play at Trouville and Monte Carlo. Only their persistency made them remarkable. It seemed that no one had won! The two thousand francs that the Baron d'Avril had taken away with him a week ago was the only amount, it appeared, that could be traced against the bank.

And, of course, there was, and had been, grumbling, whispered comments, doubts. And always there was a crowd around the table, punting now in louis, now in notes of a hundred, five hundred, a thousand francs, amid murmurs and muttered exclamations.

The afternoon of the baron's return, however, there came a little change. There were more people than ever in the rooms, for rumors of high play had brought in visitors from Beuzville, and Villar, from Dives, and even from Caen and Honfleur. There had been racing at Deauville earlier in the week, and on the following day the *Grand Prix de Trouville* was to be run. Every room in the hotel was full. Leon Diderot had strongly urged Julie to make a bold bid for fortune that afternoon, to go for a coup. The Baron d'Avril, who watched her in the intervals of his own

game, notwithstanding his abated interest in her, saw that her cheeks were flushed, and that she was playing recklessly. Also, that the banker said a quiet word to her once, to which she replied impatiently.

There was money to be won that afternoon. It was not a thousand-franc crowd that was thronging the tables, but small punters were there, who staked their louis and left them on, and withdrew after a pass of three, and were altogether careful and experienced. The bank lost steadily. The Baron d'Avril added to his winnings, was good-humored, and even made little jokes across the table. Only Julie, by some persistent misfortune, staking at the wrong time, diminishing the number of counters when she should have increased it, playing for the *coup* at the wrong time, had not succeeded in benefiting by the bank's losses.

In truth, poor Julie had lost her courage.

Her gathering difficulties and growing unhappiness were complicated by the correspondence with her husband. She had, unfortunately, written him very fully about her first evening's experiment under the guidance of the Baron d'Avril. He had replied immediately, and peremptorily, desiring her not to play again nor to go into the rooms. He did not remind her of her father's career. He loved her too much for that, but he told her he absolutely disapproved of her playing; and that she must never do so again. But three or four days had intervened between her letter and his reply to it, and in those three or four days, as we know, she had lost all her money, she was already in debt, and her mode of life at Cabourg had become altered. She was no longer the good, obedient wife, the confiding Julie of her first letter.

If she could get her money back, she would not play again. Then he would not know, he need never know, that she had disobeyed him; this was what she thought when she read what John had written. She would not distress him by telling him, that was how she solaced her conscience. There was no further

mention of baccarat in her letters, and John, who was not suspicious by nature, not a gambler, nor versed in French seaside habits, was satisfied with the short account he got of fêtes on the sands, and children's dances in the Casino, and fireworks in the evenings.

Her disingenuousness reacted upon her character, and made her always more and more reckless. Always she told herself she would not play after to-day. But the day when she did not play had not yet come. And now the sixty pounds John had given her for the three weeks' bills were all gone, and she had had forty pounds from the bank, and that very morning she had heard from John that, as Mr. Jarvis was going away on Sunday, he would take the night boat for Havre, and on Monday afternoon, or evening at latest, he would be with her in Cabourg!

No wonder she looked drawn, and haggard, and unhappy, and had no smiles nor pretty coquetties with which to greet the return of the baron.

A certain measure of reticence, a certain guard, Monsieur Diderot had put upon himself. This was for him the very woman to preside over that establishment which already the season in Cabourg was making possible. It was true he was playing for the association, and that Monsieur Bertrand and the management had their interest in the play. But it had been a good season so far, and with so many people in Cabourg, it promised to finish even better. She would have to learn to play with discretion, and she must avoid the late hours that spoiled her complexion, the excitement that shook her nerves. It was the Aphrodite of the morning bath he wanted for his rooms, which the Cabourg season, and perhaps a good finish in September at Ostend, would make possible that winter in Paris.

He knew a little of her position. It was made clearer to him presently.

"Do not dine alone to-night," he said to Julie, when they were out of the rooms. They always went the longest way back to the hotel, into the air, and round by the sea front, instead of through the Casino. "Do me the honor

for once, of joining my table. We will talk over things together. You ought to have won this afternoon, we must see what we can manage for this evening, you must try a new system."

Almost a sob escaped her.

"My husband is coming on Monday. I don't know what I shall do."

He was sorry it must be so soon. Of course the season at Cabourg would not last long, but he had counted on another week.

"Oh, well, there is to-night, and twice to-morrow, and who knows what will happen?"

"But—but——"

Of course he knew she had no money with her, she had borrowed as much as she could from the bank. At his suggestion, a hint had been given her that the bank balanced its books at the end of the week.

"I haven't enough—with me, to—to pay up properly. It is horrible to be cramped for capital. If it had not been for that, this afternoon I should have won, I know I should have won."

He commiserated with her, he was thoroughly sympathetic. He said he had thought of a way out; he would tell her at dinner. They only parted at the door of her room, his was along the same corridor.

Her toilet that night suited her admirably. It was red, and the large hat formed a background against which her brown eyes and black hair took depth and picturesqueness. It threw color into the pale olive of her skin, accentuated the soft crimson of her lips. Leon Diderot, seated opposite to her, at the narrow table by the window that overlooked the sea, had once more that expression of satisfied connoisseurship. The exquisite figure was revealed by the transparent lace of her high corsage.

He was not quite so careful, quite so self-restrained, as usual. It was the first meal they had had together. He persuaded her to drink champagne; the wine brought more color into her cheeks. The Baron d'Avril might think she had gone off, but to Monsieur Diderot, with a certain gleam in his hard eyes, and finding himself less calm than



usual, she seemed wholly desirable and attractive.

At first she was nervous and ill at ease with him; she was not sure she ought to have dined with him. She looked round to see if people were noticing them, her conversation was constrained. But the tables next them were filled by family parties, some Spaniards with their children in bright-colored clothes, swarthy and torpid; four Germans, talking at the top of their voices, disputing with the waiters over pennings, discussing dishes; an American jockey, with a heavy-scented woman. Nobody was observing Julie or her companion, and gradually, as the unaccustomed wine ran through her veins, she was externally, at least, the Julie of a fortnight ago, all pretty shyness and gesticulation, and innocent coquettish speech.

Diderot filled her glass again and again; he saw that she dined well, he met her easier mood.

Presently they began to talk more and more freely. Her husband was coming on Monday! Then, even if she had won all her money back, if she need never tell him how she had spent her time, it would be sad! It would be sad in Cabourg, if at five o'clock every day she should walk with John; if every evening at half-past nine, when the tables were crowded and all the excitement, and the play, were going on, she and John should sit together in their room, or walk a little on the sea front, and at ten should go quietly to bed!

He was sympathetic.

Madame was not born for that humdrum, stupid, English life. Madame should be where there were always gaiety and life, people coming and going, music, and fine toilets! And madame ought to wear jewelry, she ought to have a string of pearls like Madame la Comtesse de Dossy, or rubies, rubies the color, so exquisite, of madame's lips.

As the unaccustomed champagne flowed, so did Julie see more vividly than her duty, or her children, or her John, the dazzle of this picture he was drawing for her, the life all pleasure where one only dressed and played, and

listened to music, where the sky was always blue, and the air was always clear, and a pretty woman—she had almost forgotten she was pretty, except when John or her children told her so—had the homage and the tributes of all men.

The dinner was not long, although they sat and sat, until the Germans, still disputing, had clamped their noisy way out of the dining room, until the Spaniards, with sleepy courtesy, had bade their dignified good-evening to the obsequious head waiter, until even the band had departed, and through gaps of empty tables one saw the perspiring waiters standing about to cool themselves.

Leon Diderot now understood the situation. Her husband was coming on Monday, and she had lost all the money he had given her for her hotel bills. Nothing had been paid! Moreover, she owed the bank nearly two thousand francs, and she had in her purse but three louis, with which to win back all her losses—only three louis with which to play to-night, to-morrow and again in the evening. Of course she was distracted, of course she could not sleep at night, of course she looked this afternoon tired and haggard and unhappy. But, dining in company, and talking, and the wine, had done her good. He made her take a benedictine with her coffee. Gradually she had confided everything to him, everything that he had guessed so well before. She had grown quite gay towards the end of the dinner. It was the nature of this poor Julie to be emotional, carried away by the moment, to live in each little hour, the little hours that should have been all sunshine.

Leon told her after they had had their coffee, when they stood for a few moments on the steps of the hotel, that she was not to trouble about anything. He would not see her troubled. She should not borrow of the bank, nor go into the rooms without capital to play with. When she was ready, he would go upstairs with her, and bring her, to her room, a thousand francs. With that she could play all the evening, she could

give herself the chance of winning. To-morrow? Well, to-morrow must take care of itself! Come what may! To-day was theirs.

They went upstairs together presently, their rooms were on the same corridor. While she was putting on her gloves and adjusting her veil, he would get the money for her.

Before she had done more than open her wardrobe, before she had found her gloves, her veil, her evening wrap, she heard his knock at the door.

She was imprudent, she knew she was being imprudent, but he had always been respectful, and she liked him over dinner to-night. And how could she play without money? When she had asked for more at the bank this afternoon they had hesitated.

She went to the door.

He was standing outside, but the corridor was rather dusky; he had a pocket-book in his hand, he fumbled at the contents.

"I have brought you the notes; but I cannot see."

The "come in" was said without intention. He was in the room before she realized it. He closed the door behind him, but his manner was just the same, respectful, very quiet. If her heart was beating quickly, and the flush coming and going in her cheeks, it was the wine she had drunk—she knew it was the wine she had drunk that made all her pulses throb.

Notwithstanding that Monsieur Diderot still examined his pocket-book for the notes, he saw the distracting disorder of his lady's room. The pink *peignoir* hanging, the open wardrobe with its silks and laces, the turned-down bed, the dainty nightgown laid out, the blue, small slippers on the floor, the dressing table with its silver brushes and mirrors, while over everything was that impalpable feminine perfume, made up of scent sachets and powder and water softeners; aromatic, dainty and intoxicating.

His hand, those deft and slender-fingered, croupier's hands of his, trembled a little, as he counted out to her the thin, soft foreign notes.

"One, two, three," he counted up to ten. Then his eyes met hers. If she had not smiled, because she was nervous, with lips rather tremulous, with a little trick of uplifted eyebrow, with the brown eyes half frightened, half amused; if she had not, in fact, been Julie, a little of a flirt at heart, and wanting to thank Monsieur Diderot, though her words came not easily, he might not have dared. But as it was—

Well! that one—that little kiss he took could hurt no one. Julie was shocked, but she could not cry out. She could push him away, and hear her own heart beating, and be scarlet and angry and nearly crying. But she could not play without his notes; they were still in his hand. And he apologized. "Madame was so adorable, and in her own room—he was only a man! He was a thousand times regretful. See! He knelt, he kissed her hand, he implored her pardon." She would not have forgiven him if she had not wanted to get rid of him—wanted him to go from her room. It was absurd of him to be on his knees—he must get up, quick, quick! he must go, Marie might be coming in, the chambermaid might knock. She was adorably shy and distressed, and yet not cold.

That the *valet de chambre* forgot to knock, that he came into the room as he always came at this time in the evening, to tidy it after madame had gone downstairs, was a thousand times unfortunate. It was worse than unfortunate; it was terrible, that the Baron d'Avril happened to be passing through the corridor at the moment the door opened. Her own confusion, Leon Diderot's self-possession, were equally abominable. His shrug, his regrets, his tip to the valet when he made his smiling, insulting apology, were all separate outrages.

She remained alone in her room a little while, trying to recover herself, her calm, her reasoning power. She had done no harm; why, then, should she be so agitated, so furious?

It is not necessary to dwell upon the events of that evening and of the next day; it was cruel to dwell upon them.

She could not stay alone in her room; it was full now of that scene, of the open door, and the face of the Baron d'Avril, of the expression of the *valet de chambre*, of—of her own thoughts.

She would go down, she would play just that once more. To-morrow, to-morrow she would go to church with her children, the Protestant Church, at Beuzeville. On Monday, John would be there!

But in the rooms, the baron's ironical greeting, the smiles she saw or imagined on the faces of the women, the curiosity or interest in Monsieur Bertrand's glance, as he gossiped with the baron, and anon, looked in her direction, rasped her quivering nerves, made it impossible for her to concentrate her mind on the play. She was ashamed; yes, it was shame that sent quiver after quiver through her, that made her hide her downcast eyes, and feel that everyone, in all that room, was looking at her, was staring at her, was seeing Leon Diderot as he had stood up with her in her rooms, his arms around her.

He had kept her usual place for her beside him. In some quiet way, almost without speech, he conveyed his sympathy, his understanding. Her footstool was there, her card and pencil were there; there was a little pile of counters in front of her.

"It is an intermission," he said, "we have only played one round."

And with fingers that trembled, she tried to take up the thread of the game, to mark her card, and stake her louis.

This was the last, the very last time she would ever play! On Monday John would be here, she would make him take her away from this horrible Cabourg, these men that smiled and shrugged, these women that stared, back to dear Southampton, her little house, her quiet friends, her life so still and orderly.

But if she could get back all her money, if she could pay back the bank, and Monsieur Diderot, and everybody, how much easier it would be to meet John, to tell him everything, to be as she had been ten days ago. Ten days! it was a cycle, an age!

She was winning; not largely, but

winning, nevertheless. Her louis came back to her again and again. It was an intermittence, well marked. She had learned a little of the game, and now took only alternate chances. Soon she forgot everything and everybody, in the absorption of her calculations. It was really a remarkable series, just such a run that fell in with the system that she had acquired. Her pile of counters grew steadily larger and larger. It seemed a pity to play in louis when the game was so set, so certain. She began to punt in notes. In four deals she had won five hundred francs! Her heart beat high, her joyousness returned. She had no memory, or thought, of anything but the cards! How soon it was at the end of the deal! How slowly the croupier shuffled! She could hardly restrain herself from crying out "that is enough, surely that is enough," as the three new packs were opened, and shuffled, and reshuffled. At last it was done. The red card was handed to her politely for the cut, her fingers trembled as she inserted it. Now they were all stacked before Monsieur Diderot, and the new deal began.

But the intermission, the regularity, all that had made the "system" play so well, were at an end! Two wins for the punt, one for the bank, three for the punt, seven for the bank! Who could play such a series? And she was playing in notes, going for a *coup*.

But the *coup*! the *coup* eluded her. Again and again she tried for it, and doubled, and lost again, and then won, and increased the stake, and saw the whole swept away. The system was absurd, infamous. She discarded it, and decided to play by inspiration. It came to her that Monsieur Diderot had told her gambling was an inspiration! But, unfortunately, her inspiration was as faulty as the system. Whenever she increased her stake, that was the time "nine to the bank," or "eight to the bank," was called in that maddeningly monotonous way by the croupier. What an atrocious accent he had, too; the man could not be a Frenchman at all! If, for once, she did not stake, or staked little, whether it was a six or a five at

which the player stopped, it did not matter. The bank was *baccarat*, and Leon Diderot's quiet "pay" brought her back only a miserable counter or so.

She got beyond her own self-control. Recklessly now, she shoved her money over the line. The bank won and lost, but always Julie lost; or so it seemed to her. There was a run of three for the table, it was again: "*Dernier coup. Il y a six cartes a la coup. Qui ponte accepte,*" sang out the croupier, in his monotonous chant. In a half-mad moment, she put all that was in front of her over the line—there was a sickening moment of suspense. "To the bank, eight to the bank." It was all over.

She staggered up from her chair, it grated on the floor as she pushed it away, and everybody looked up. "Madame has had luck," said the changer, sympathetically. Already some one had slipped into the place she had left vacant. But there was a pause in the play; she had not heard what monsieur had said, but there was another sound of the scraping of a chair on the wooden floor.

The high play was over, at least for the moment. Monsieur Diderot had had enough, he was tired of it, he relinquished his seat.

Julie was not quite steady on her feet, the lamps seemed to be swaying and growing dim. She was glad to find Diderot by her side. The room had grown fuller and fuller as the evening had worn on, and first the audience from the theater, and then the dancers from the Casino, had joined their parties in the club. She had to find her way through the crowd. There were many to note her going. But only those who were seated at the table, who had, as it were, watched the drama from its inception, shrugged their shoulders, or smiled their knowing smiles when the banker followed her from the room. To the many visitors at Cabourg-Dives, intrigue and easy commerce were as daily sights. They knew nothing of John, or the children; to them there was nothing tragic in the situation.

She was not feeling well; it was the moment of reaction from the excitement,

from the champagne, from the play. As soon as she was in the air, the faintness wore off, but her unstrung nerves made her hysterical, made her cry a little. They sat together a little while on one of the seats overlooking the sea. She was glad of the support of his encircling arm. When she was able, she asked him why he had left off play. She said she was "all right now," he must go back.

"I have had enough. I am tired of it for to-night—and you, too, you are over-tired. They keep the rooms too hot, too close, and all those people in there to-night make the atmosphere impossible. When you are better recovered, I suggest a little supper together, a sandwich, a glass of wine, otherwise you will not sleep. Pouf! One was asphyxiated in there; my mouth is quite dry."

When she had recovered herself a little, when her head grew a little clearer, and she saw the moon, and the dark heave of the waves, she could not put away thought. Maddeningly it pressed upon her—she felt sick with it, sick as when she was in that awful steamer. How happy she was then, when she thought she was so miserable, and how good John had been, how tender!

She had gambled, had gambled away all her money, and his, and the children's—how could she ever face him! And before her was the dreadful night, when she would lie awake, and think of everything, and the darkness would be full of vague terrors, and she would hear voices, and the creaking of doors, and there would be nothing for her but thought, awful thought!

Of course she was glad to put off the commencement of that miserable night. The sandwiches were dry and tasteless, but the champagne was cold, sparkling, and welcome to her parched tongue. Why had she been afraid of it? Now she drank and drank again; she was extraordinarily thirsty. It was kind, it was considerate of Monsieur Diderot to have given up his play for her. Now that she was recovering her spirits, she must tell him she was grateful. She began to talk, and laugh, and show her

dimples, and her pretty teeth. She was not quite sure what she was saying, but she knew she was being amusing, for both of them were laughing nearly all the time. It was quite a merry supper.

#### CHAPTER IV.

The next day, although she rose late, and her head ached fearfully, and she felt ill, desperately, miserably ill, with her fevered tongue and some horrible, horrible memory that she could not put away from her, she yet would keep her promise to go to church with the children.

But it was too late to get to Houlgate in time for the service, Marie told her. The tram car went at ten minutes to eleven, and already it was half-past ten. Well, then, Jack should go on the sands as he wished. It was no use trying to bring English habits with them to the seaside. And she would go on the sands with them, or, at least, join them there as soon as she was dressed; but they must run away now. She would get up, and be with them by the time Jack had built her a sand chair to sit in.

She hated getting out of bed, she hated facing the day, and her thoughts, she could not push that nightmare wholly away from her. There was a knock at the door while she was dressing. She turned the key, and took the note the valet brought her.

But she did not open the note, to hold it in her hand made her feel faint. It was still unopened when she had finished her dressing, when, with her parasol and her bag, and everything just as it had been yesterday, she went downstairs, and through the glass doors of the hotel, and on to the front.

She looked about her quickly, nervously, when she got free from the hotel. Of course he was there, watching for her. She did not know she expected him, she did not know what she had expected. But he rose from his seat on the esplanade, cool in his gray morning clothes, with his *Petit Journal*, and his cigarette. He smiled at her as he rose.

Leon Diderot, although he was not a gentleman, and had no pretensions to the title, nor even claimed it, was very much a man of the world. He had traveled, seen many people, learned the shibboleths, and cultivated the outside of good manners. He spoke to her easily enough about the weather, he told her of the fire in the Casino at Trouville last night, he related the latest revelation in the Humbert case. Presently she was seated by his side, feeling numbed, very cold, although the day was so warm, and answering mechanically, talking a little eventually in the same vein.

"We will defer our chat, will we not?" he asked presently, when the band left off playing, when the esplanade began to empty, when it was evident that Cabourg was about to lunch. Now his eyes were seeking hers, and the slow color mounted painfully into her cheeks. "There are things we must say to each other, is it not so? I am at madame's command, completely, absolutely. Paris, Ostend, it is not too late for Spa. But it is to-morrow the husband arrives, to-day we must talk."

She saw her two little children, with their nurse, come up from the sands. She could almost hear Genie say "mumsey never came, she promised, but she never came." Perhaps Jack had made her a seat on the sands! The eyes she turned on Leon Diderot were piteous.

"My children, my little babies?" she said to him, her voice had tears in it.

He looked away from her, he rolled up his cigarette delicately.

"*Diable!*" he said, "bring them with you! I want you to be happy, comfortable. They will be in the way, but as madame wishes, everything as madame wishes."

What a wearisome, terrible lunch! When he followed her upstairs she had neither strength nor courage to oppose him. This poor, weak, wicked Julie was like a wild animal in a trap, the spring had caught her.

Afterwards she could not remember what he had said to her. When he went out of the room again, he left her

shuddering, and very cold. All she realized was that she must leave Cabourg to-morrow, before John came. She must write to John. But ah! how difficult that was! How long she sat with the paper before her, the pen in her hand, trying to write to John.

All the afternoon she tried to write. The sun streamed into the room, and one little pulse in her temple beat—beat so that she could not think. Her feet were so cold, her hands also, although the August sun streamed into the room, and there was no breath of air; while the pain in her head was almost unbearable.

The children came in, but they chattered, and said things to her that she could not bear. She caught the little one in her arms once, passionately, swayed with her to and fro in the chair.

"Oh, my sweet, my darling. And I love you so. Mumsey loves her little daughter—and her Jack."

Her tears streamed down, she began to sob wildly. It was Marie who suggested she should lie down on the bed and have the room darkened, and try if a cup of tea would do her good. Marie was not quite ignorant of what was going on, of the gossip in the servants' quarters along the corridor.

The tea and the darkness, and, perhaps, that fit of sobbing did her good. Toward the evening she found herself more composed, and after Marie had put the children to bed, when she persuaded her mistress to a bouillon in her own room, instead of going downstairs, she grew better still.

"I will sit with them while you are at supper," said this poor Julie. "Go down for once and I will sit with them."

She saw them sleeping side by side in their cots, their flushed and sunburnt faces. When she put her hand to her eyes to get rid of the tears that prevented her seeing, at least, she thought, "John will say they look well, he will not think they have been neglected."

She knelt presently between the two little cots, not to pray, she did not feel like prayer, but to put her finger into Genie's hand, to see if she would clasp it, as she had done when she was a

newly born infant lying at her breast, when John had stood beside them both. Neither John nor she was of those who prayed. But that once he had knelt by the bedside, even as she was kneeling now, and his face had been hidden and she knew a sob had escaped him, because the bed shook. She had put a weak hand on his head. She had been very ill when Genie was born, and there had been fear that John would lose both wife and baby daughter.

"Little flushed darling!" She moved in her sleep, and—yes! Ah! Julie was glad in her heart when the baby fist closed in her finger. Genie wasn't angry with mumsey; she clasped tight her finger, and opened her eyes in her sleep, and rolled round again, all curled up, like a baby animal, but still clasping her finger.

"She is so loving, the little sweet! She will climb on his knee, and snuggle her head against his coat, and comfort him. But I shan't be there to see—I shan't be there to see!" Oh! how she cried as she knelt between the cots; and knew she would not be there to see John with her children on his knee. Jack too! how sturdy and fine he was. He had kicked off the bedclothes, she kissed the brown leg, when she had risen from her knees. She left it wet with her tears. How like John he was as he slept, how she longed for John. Her heart was aching, and aching with longing, unbearably.

No! she said no prayer for them as she sat in the darkened nursery, listening to their breathing, knowing it was for the last time. Unless love is prayer, and repentance is prayer, and misery and all most poignant feeling are prayer, she said none.

When Marie returned, Julie went quietly from the room. But first she kissed them each again, just once on their warm brown cheeks. Genie stirred and almost woke, instinct seemed as if it would wake her, would tell her, how her mumsey longed that once, just once more, that she would fling those loving baby arms around her neck, and say her baby words, "Genie loves mumsey, Genie loves her pretty



mumsey." But it was not so, she slept on! And Jack slept soundly.

She wrote to John after she left the children.

DEAR, DEAR HUSBAND: How can I tell you how bad I am? you would not believe it. I could not see your eyes, your face that I love, and tell you. Genie will comfort you. Darling husband, never tell her, let her think I was a "good, sweet mumsey." She called me that today. I don't know how it all happened. You know I never meant to be so wicked—you will know that, darling. Oh! how I love you, I love you and the children, and all my happy life with you. I wish I were dead, I wish I had died when Genie was born, and you knelt down by the bed—and I think you cried because we were safe. Do you remember? Now you will wish I had died then. No! I don't think you will, you won't even hate me. I know you love me. You will be sorry, sorry all the time, and you will miss me when you come home of an evening, and you will be lonely while you dress, and I am not there to chatter to you. But oh! my darling, darling, you won't be so lonely, so unhappy as I; the children will run in to you, and their voices will fill the house, and they will clamber about you, and I shall have nothing, nothing, all because of what I have done. You won't think of me unkindly, you will say "that poor Julie," that "poor," that was my wife! and Genie will kiss your eyelids softly, and you will forget. Only I shall never forget my happy life, and my children, and my husband that I love—

She could not write any more.

She packed her things, tears falling among them all while she packed. Tomorrow she would go away, early, before John came.

Leon Diderot behaved quite well, quite considerably. He only met her at the station; the luggage was already there. She had not seen the children again; it was the early train to Paris they were taking, and she had told Marie she was not to be disturbed. The story was all over the hotel, but there were few curious eyes at this time in the morning.

In the train he talked to her about last night's play. The bank had had phenomenal good fortune, it was fortunate she was not playing. He rolled his cigarette, and talked. She did not hate him. All her mind and heart were with her children, and with John when he should get her letter; and the pain in her head and in her heart were as one.

## CHAPTER V.

John Courtney arrived at Cabourg about three o'clock in the afternoon of the day Julie had left. He had traveled all night and caught easily the connecting boat between Havre and Trouville. It is possible he was disappointed at not seeing her awaiting him at the landing stage; she could easily have learned the time of the arrival of the boat. It was absurd to feel any vague uneasiness or disappointment that she was not at Trouville station. She was not used to traveling alone, and Trouville might have seemed quite a journey to her. In a year or two, perhaps, when Jack was a bit bigger, that sturdy young Jack of hers, she would be satisfied to trust herself to his escort. John smiled somewhat tenderly all to himself in the train when he recognized he was not sorry that at present she went nowhere without her husband.

But when, at Cabourg station, where he had his head and half of his body out of the window three minutes before they stopped, there was no sign of her, or the children, or even Marie with explanation, there is no doubt his heart sank. Why, even when they had been separated but a day, when he had gone to Rochester or to Chatham, she had met him at Southampton station with eager welcoming, full of the day's news, the night's loneliness, the gladness of his return. And now it was a fortnight since they had met.

There was no one from the Grand Hotel de Cabourg on the platform; not Julie, nor Marie, nor the children. A couple of Frenchmen got out of the train, an *ouvrier* with his wife, and a little boy; these were on the platform, but for the rest, the station was empty.

Outside, the omnibus from the Grand Hotel was waiting. He could not ask the porter, although he wore on his cap the legend "Grand Hotel de Cabourg," if everything was all right. It was astonishing how his heart had failed him, how heavy it was, what a presentiment of trouble he had already.

The two Frenchmen who had been in the train got into the omnibus with him.

It seemed they had gone to Trouville on a "locomobile," there had been a breakdown, and they had to take the train. John was glad to listen to them talking, it would make the way shorter while that lumbering omnibus jolted up the narrow street. But a sentence that leaped from the lips of the Baron d'Avril, for of course it was the Baron d'Avril, startled him, and arrested his attention completely.

"It is lucky it was not by 'locomobile' that the *jolie Anglaise* and the Belgian started to go to Paris. They might have encountered the husband on the road, the husband who was to arrive this afternoon, and who it would perhaps be amusing to watch."

Then he told his companion the story of what he had seen a few days previously in the corridor. Told it as he had translated it. It lost nothing through the fact that the Baron d'Avril had thought Julie pretty and fascinating, when he had driven her from the races, and had come back to find that she had forgotten to be pretty and fascinating to him.

John, though he believed nothing, and understood only half, and knew it could not be his Julie of whom they were talking, yet went suddenly gray round the lips. Although his mouth was so firmly set and rigid, yet his lips were white, and his face gray.

If he had been the English husband of the lady of whom they were talking they would not have found it amusing to watch him, for he would have shown nothing.

Curious looks, sympathetic looks, cynical looks he met, as he stood in the hall of the hotel; whispers, and shrugs and stares. But he was not amusing, this English husband!

Monsieur Charles came forward. He knew who it was, he was ready with explanations, with shrugs, with sympathy, with anything that would be welcome.

John briefly said the porter need not take up his things.

How stiff he was and cold; it was no wonder that madame had fled from him. But with Monsieur Diderot!

The Baron d'Avril, who realized now that it was he who had told, by his incautious conversation, this English husband what had become of his wife, was ready to apologize for what he had done. But John was unapproachable as he stood in the hall of the hotel and listened, still without a word, to what the manager should tell him. He could not know the little feeling of malice, of hurt vanity that led the Baron d'Avril to be so interested in watching how he took the news.

"Madame had left a note for monsieur—the nurse had it, should he call the nurse downstairs to 'monsieur?'" asked Monsieur Charles.

No, John would go up.

When he was in the children's room, and Genie had climbed on his knee, and Jack stood sturdily before him, both of them looking so sunburnt and well, it was indeed as she had thought. He saw they had not been neglected, he saw they looked sunburnt and well; he was glad in their well-being.

With Genie on his knee and his arm around her, with her head nestling against his shoulder, he read his wife's letter, that Marie handed to him so silently. He read it very cursorily. He was to read it many times with thought, and get all the comfort he could from the love of it. Just now he read it only cursorily. His mind, notwithstanding that it was half stunned by his sudden trouble, and he had been traveling all night, notwithstanding that he had had little food since yesterday, and was in bad trim for thinking, was quite made up, had been already made up, possibly, when in the omnibus he heard the two Frenchmen laugh, and befoul her with their words.

He sent the children out of the room, told them to run away and play. He had no need then to question Marie. Marie, who loved her mistress, and had the national tolerance for moral lapses, told him all she knew.

She told him how madame had played, and had lost large sums of money, and had suffered because of what monsieur might say, and of how she had cried and cried on Sunday,

poor lady, and sat with her children and rocked them in her arms, and cried. This Monsieur Diderot, too—

But that John waved away; to that he would not listen.

He thought he had the clew, the story. She had played baccarat after he had written her not to do so. She had lost money, she—she had been frightened to face him. That was terrible to him. How harsh he must have been, how unreasonable sometimes, that she was frightened to face him. She was so young, and the gambling was in her blood. Did she really think he would go back to Southampton without her, keep the children to comfort him, and leave her in the cold? Miss her? Why, the home, the days, the life, without her smiles and welcome, would be impossible; he realized that quite clearly. When the little-girl was in his arms, and his son stood before him, neither of them could he see as clearly as his poor Julie sitting by their cots last night in the dark. Oh! why had he not come one day sooner?

He wasted little time after he had heard all that Marie could tell him. He went downstairs again, rejecting all sympathy, all that the curious head waiter would have told him, when they took his order, as he sat at the empty table d'hôte making a meal that was a necessity, meanwhile making also his plans. He wanted to hear nothing. He asked the time of the afternoon train to Paris. He heard without wincing that it was to the Hotel Terminus they had gone.

His poor little Julie! How plainly he saw her sitting crying by her children, because she had lost so much money and she dared not wait to tell him. The rest he pushed from his mind. There was love, love for him, and him alone, in that letter.

"Darling, darling!" it said, "you won't be so lonely, so unhappy, as I!"

He was not going to let her be lonely and unhappy, he was going to follow her and bring her back, and scold her for having feared to tell him. The fever and obsession of gambling John knew; he had seen its hold upon her father.

How he blamed himself that he had exposed her to this temptation, that he had left her unguarded, just when she needed guardianship. It was only the gambling John saw. To anything and everything else he shut his eyes. He knew his little Julie loved him.

He began re-reading the letter in the train to Paris. He read it many times in the days that followed.

He found them at the Hotel Terminus, but that made no difference to him; Julie, it appeared, had been taken ill in the train. Monsieur had sent for a doctor at once, the moment they had arrived. The doctor said she must have a nurse; a Sister of Charity was with her. Madame, it appeared, was very ill. She had talked, she had raved, monsieur could hear her through the door of her room.

The night porter was most attentive. When he showed John his apartment, he hoped he would not be disturbed by the delirium of madame.

As far as Leon Diderot was concerned John's interview with him the next morning was very simple and easy. Leon Diderot was altogether put out, and distracted by the position in which he found himself. He had been carried away by his dream when he had left Cabourg for Paris with Julie Courtney. He had all a gambler's superstition; he had won, won, won, since he had been at Cabourg. Julie brought him luck, would bring him more. It had mounted to his head a little that she had consented so readily to join her fortunes with his. But in the train she had become suddenly ill, she had seemed not to know where she was. When the train stopped, he had ordered cognac for her, but it had done no good. She had grown worse and worse, she had grown faint, and then had talked as if in fever. By the time they got to the Gare St. Lazare, she was half unconscious, and had to be lifted from the train. He was distracted. The doctor of the hotel had told him she was ill, very ill; the fever high, it was impossible, now she was there, that she could be moved! If she got well—there was an "if" it seemed, it would not be for

a long time, a very long-time. He must have a nurse, perhaps two! Ah! it was terrible for Monsieur Diderot, who had his living to get, and had not been used to spend money, except upon himself!

He was not even insolent to John. He was rather conciliatory, and even deprecatory, and cringing. He fell in with John's view, that "madame had been unfortunate at the gaming table," that he had assisted her, and then, when she had decided to come to Paris, he offered her his escort. He accepted, too, John's check for the thousand francs he had lent madame. He quite agreed that Paris was dull this time of year! For himself, he was moving on to Ostend immediately, that very day in fact. The mistake that had been made at the hotel office he would put right. Because they had arrived together, because he had been so fortunate as to be of assistance to madame when she was taken ill in the train, they had perhaps jumped at the conclusion at the bureau that she was his wife! He would explain, he would descend at once, and explain that she was the wife of monsieur.

It was extraordinary how soon John and Leon Diderot understood each other, the one in his anxiety to get rid of his responsibility, the other in his much more passionate anxiety to assume it.

By midday John was seated by the bedside of his wife. She did not recognize him, neither then, nor for the many days that followed. He sat there, by the bedside, listening to her delirious raving, cutting a strange figure before the two sisters and the doctor, and the hotel attendants, who came in and out, and whispered about his story, and knew well enough, notwithstanding what Monsieur Diderot had said at the office, all that had occurred.

It was brain fever that she had. She might live, she might die, the doctors said.

Notwithstanding all the things she said in her raving, all the things she said in her muttering, John hardly moved from the bedside. If he could have been glad, if there had been any room in his heart or mind for gladness,

or thanksgiving, while her life hung in the balance, and she lay there before him, so near death and suffering, he would have been glad that he had followed her, that he had come up with her. For, among all the things she said, the name of John came oftenest.

"John, John, John!" Sometimes for hour after hour there was nothing but this cry, and the jargon of the baccarat room; "make your bets, make your bets. Eight to the bank, nine to the bank, the bank wins," and then "John" again, with sweet words and tender words, and words that wrung his heart. Once when the fever, for the moment, had left her, and she was lying exhausted, and her voice was so low that he had to bend over her so that he might hear, she spoke to him as if she knew him. There was no recognition in the eyes that looked into his, but she spoke as if she knew him.

"Do you know what '*baccarat*' means, John, my John? It is worthless, valueless, nothing; you throw it away, you have lost everything, it is all gone. That is me, *baccarat*!—John, I am *baccarat*, valueless, nothing—are you listening?"—and the thread went, and the rest was mere quick, incoherent babble.

At last the day came when the fever and the inflammation were all gone. Weak, exhausted, after twenty-three hours almost unbroken sleep, she smiled at him, as she had smiled at him on waking, all the years of their married life.

"My John," she said in her weak voice, "my John," and smiled.

Then he broke down a little. Then, for the first time, his rigid face broke, and he had to hurry from the room. He was back again almost immediately.

"Don't go away! Why did you?" she asked him. She had forgotten everything.

"You must not talk, dear one," he said; "you have been very ill." His voice was husky.

"I will not speak. But sit there, sit there, where I can see you all the time. I have had dreams; horrible, terrible dreams. I dreamt that you were not there, that I was all alone, always

alone! That the children were not there, that——"

She was growing excited. The nurse hurried to the bedside.

"Hush, hush, dear, I am here; you are not alone, you have never been alone. Your old John won't leave you, he has never left you. Forget your dreams, you are getting better, you will get better quickly. Hush! sleep happily. I will not move——" He soothed her, petted her, reassured her, calmed her.

Ah! he was glad now. There was room in him now for gladness, for gratitude, for triumph almost. All he would remember was that he had been there, by her side, when she awoke from her illness and delirium.

John Courtney took his wife back, not

only to his home, but to his heart, to be again with her children, to be sheltered and cared for as she needed.

Nothing had he forgotten of the hour when the child, for she was only a child then, had flung herself into his arms, and thanked him, because he had asked her to be his wife, and told him she was sad and lonely and could not stand alone. Nothing had he forgotten of the days of happiness for him that had followed, of the years of their married life, of the home she had made for him, full of sweet gayety, and little kindnesses, and words that were like kisses. He had left her three unguarded weeks in a foreign gambling hell, and his was the wrong, his then must be the reparation.



## THE HUMAN FLOOD

WHO can but wonder, when the busy round  
 Of day is done, and from the back-flung doors  
 Into the street the human flood-tide pours,  
 And sweeps the paven paths with restless sound,  
 Whither are borne, unto what unknown bound,  
 The broken ripples, on what hidden shores  
 They fall at last—these jostling, hurrying scores—  
 What haven-beach, or far or near, is found!

There is for all some sheltering bight or bay,  
 Lit ill or well by Love's soft beaconry,  
 Wherein they pause, a little while at rest.  
 Then the impulsion of another day  
 Back draws them, as the luring moon the sea,  
 Tumbled and tossed along life's ocean breast.

CLINTON SCOLLARD.

# ON THE CREST OF A WAVE

By Beatrice Hanscom



HOUSTON, superbly comfortable in the easiest of all the easy-chairs in Billy Bolton's den, gazed at the multiplicity of smoker's conveniences and Turkish arrangements with a rather quizzical smile.

He wondered if Sallie had bought out the entire visible supply. Then he remembered that, of old, Sallie was prone to lavish herself on details.

"Well?" said Sallie Bolton, interrogatively.

She sat on the broad, low window seat, a smart, animated little figure.

Her white linen gown was cut on precisely the proper lines; her blond hair was arranged in the extreme of fashion; she was frankly worldly and unquenchably enthusiastic.

Houston nodded with a comprehending good-fellowship.

"A lot more than that," he said. "It's too cozy, if anything. And it's eminently satisfying to get back and see you all again."

She swept a gay gesture.

"And how do you think we feel?" she said, buoyantly. "When you've come back as a celebrity, in the bargain. We've been awfully proud of you, Bob. Why, ever since they listed the mine on the Stock Exchange, I've watched the financial columns like a stock broker. Whenever it has gone up, I've felt like making a sandwichman out of myself, and calling: 'Look at the Kitty Cary now.'"

Houston grinned.

"On several occasions it has gone down, I've noticed," he said. "Gone down with as much energy as though it expected to strike something rich at

the bottom. How did that affect you?"

"That miserable syndicate tried every possible way to ruin you," she said, indignantly. "But you have beaten them every trick they have tried. You are going to win out with flying colors."

"Yes," he said, steadily, "I'm going to win out." And his tone was that of a fighter who has fought long and doggedly.

His square-set shoulders and the athletic poise of his body gave a suggestion of reserve force that was both restful and convincing; his clean-cut features had the double charm of good-humor and strength of purpose. That audacious young Mr. Houston, as the newspapers had called him slightly, when he first took his stand against a powerful corporation, had proved to have unexpectedly good staying qualities.

He moved now restlessly in his chair. The mention of the mine had spurred him to a desire for action. It had been his bugle call for so long, that with the thought of it he went to it in spirit. A wave of West-sickness swept over him. A gashed and scarred hillside wore a golden aureole; the throbbing of the engines was a Wagnerian score.

He had put his life into that life; the West was his country; the mine was his mine; he would fight for it as a knight of old for his lady, as a patriot for his cause; his honor was at stake.

He brought himself back resolutely.

"Let us return to our civilized sheep," he said, smilingly. "Tell me who are to be here. It was very good of you to give the wanderer a few hours' lead. Coach me up, or I may make some scandalous *faux pas*."



"I meant to have Daisy Knight while you were here," said Sallie, irrelevantly, "but her father is ill again. It's too bad."

"Too bad for the old gentleman," said Houston, cheerfully, "but he's done me a mighty good turn. The fair Daisy can give the best makes of phonographs points on endurance. She comes as near perpetual motion as we shall get before the millenium."

"But she is remarkably pretty, Bob?" Sallie expostulated.

"She is that," he agreed, calmly. "If I were a deaf mute, I should yearn to make her mine, if she'd promise in the marriage service never to learn the sign language. Who did you say *were* coming?"

"The bishop and his wife——" she began.

"Good," said Houston. "I like to be in a properly chaperoned party myself. It's nice to know that if you should unexpectedly meet the lady of your heart things would all be so handy."

"And Dicky Ayres——"

"Is Dicky still a bit garrulous after dinner?"

"He's the same old gossip, but he's invaluable for a filler in," said Sallie, "and you remember Margaret Lane?"

"Poor pictures and good dogs. Think's she's Bohemian," summed up Houston, succinctly.

There was a slight pause.

Houston looked at her quizzically.

She laughed.

"It's no use putting off the evil moment, Bob," she said. "I throw myself on your finer feelings. I hope it won't be awkward. You see, when I asked her, I didn't know you could come this week, and then you said this was the only week you *could* come. She's one of the dearest girls, not a bit like her father. We're very fond of her. I couldn't tell her. It would have assumed so much, and if I'd hinted it to you, you might not have come at all."

"Suppose you tell me who you are talking about," he suggested.

"Evelyn Wainright," said Sallie.

"Old Frank's daughter?"

She nodded.

Houston smiled at her cheerfully.

"My dear Sallie," he said, "what difference does it make! Because the venerable Wainright and his *confrères* are fighting me in the courts for all my worldly goods, and because I think he's a sanctimonious pirate, doesn't make it impossible for his daughter and myself to meet casually on neutral grounds. The Guelphs and the Ghibellines dine out together at their mutual friends, as a matter of course. It's only when they fall in love, that the situation becomes awkward. Miss Wainright and I are in no danger of that."

Sallie Burton gave a sigh of relief. She knew Houston erred towards the Quixotic; and Billy had, manlike, left the responsibility with her.

"That's such a sensible way to feel about it," she said. "Of course, Isabel Ten Broek is coming, too, and I had to ask Schuyler Lane. He's always there. I'm not sure which it is; only, of course, Schuy is as poor as a church mouse, for all his excellent family connections and Evelyn's money——"

"So you assume he would naturally lay the family honors fate has thrust upon him at the feet of the gilded girl," said Houston, with lazy scorn. "Who is Isabel Ten Broek?"

"She's Evelyn's social secretary. Her father, John Ten Broek—you know who he was—went down in that Northern Pacific corner, and shot himself over it, poor man. Of course, Isabel could have lived with the Peter Ten Broeks, but she preferred to be independent. She and Evelyn had always been great friends. They're always asked together. Isabel is more popular than Evelyn, if anything."

"I shall like Isabel," he declared. "I couldn't help liking John Ten Broek's daughter. I happen to know the inside history of his unlucky plunge. He was too square to save himself, and let his friends go to the wall. Half the men on Wall Street would have used a stock-jobbing trick that he was urged to use, and would have thought it merely shrewd."

His brows drew a trifle closer to-

gether. Defective sense of honor, injustice, trickery, stung him to scorn.

Then his face cleared sunnily.

"Be good to me," he coaxed. "Let's go for a sail before anyone else comes."

"I can't, Bob," she said, ruefully. "They're coming on every train from three till six, and it's past two now. Don't you want to go out alone?"

"I do," he said, energetically, getting out of his chair. "I want to go as thoroughly as though I were a small boy, and thought I might catch a pirate. Not that one has to go on the water to do that these days."

In the doorway he turned back.

"I'm going out to dream of a certain young lady," he said, mysteriously. "She's my only love, and she reciprocates my fond devotion. She's an heirless, too. Worth her weight in aristocratic metal any day, and her name is Kitty Cary."

Sallie smiled after him.

The breeze came in at the open window with a delicious whiff of the sea spicing its suggestions of leafage and bloom.

She gave a little sigh of relief. She had not been quite ingenuous with Houston. That he and Evelyn Wainright should or should not meet was not the important question. But unless Evelyn came——

"If," said Sallie Burton, enthusiastically, pressing one firm little palm against the other. "If," she said, with shining eyes; and the word had something of the petitioning quality of prayer.

The breeze held obligingly through the afternoon; the boat sped along over the waves as daintily as a water sprite; Houston managed ropes and tiller with a zestful sense of mastery.

The ocean beckoned him on; the rugged coast line coaxed him past one projection, then another.

"You cannot guess what lies beyond," the breeze whispered, sirenlike. Each projecting promontory formed itself into an interrogation point. It was a day for daring, and when the time came to turn back, it was a wrench. It does

not lie in the heart of man willingly to turn from mystery to certainty.

*Wander lust* can be as keen a pang as *heimweh*.

With every lessening reach to landing Houston felt the growing futility of house parties.

Then the miracle happened.

Clear and powerful, "*Hoyotoho! Hoyotoho!*" the Walküre cry sounded across the waters; and past a jagged point of land that pointed out into the water like a half-finished obelisk overturned, drifted a canoe.

In it a girl sat with a stillness that suggested tension. She was gowned in white. The wind blew her hair across her face. She flung the Walküre cry to the winds with a fierce energy.

Then as she caught Houston's eye, she bent with a swift suppleness, and held up a broken paddle.

Houston's muscles set tense. He turned his boat towards her with a dexterity that reckoned fractions of an inch.

It was no light task to pick her up. The waves were running fairly high. A jar of his boat against that canoe would upset it; a rope flung, even if she caught it, would do so no less inevitably. He must pick her up bodily, and he would have but one chance.

With the impact of the sailboat against the canoe, the thing was done for rescue or disaster.

He bore down upon her swiftly, calculating the canoe's drift as well as his own boat's motion. He caught the ropes and tiller in his left hand, and bracing himself firmly, swung his right arm far out. "Trust yourself to me. Stand up. Now," he called; and with the swift necessity for action, he found time to admire, subconsciously, the cool precision with which she got on her feet, and nodding comprehendingly, threw her arms above her head. She was relying on him utterly, placing herself in the greatest danger possible on the chance of his success. Chance? It must be certainty.

His arm caught her in a viselike grip, as he half lifted her, half swung her

over the side of the boat, and down beside him.

The canoe dipped deeply, and swept past them upturned.

She steadied herself against him for the briefest instant. Then she laughed low and marvelously, without a tinge of fear.

"What a swoop!" she said. "You must be the last of the Vikings."

She sat beside him as nonchalantly as though they had sailed the day together.

"How did it happen?" demanded Houston.

She looked at him with the most wonderful eyes in the world; eyes deep brown, liquid as a water spaniel's, full of mysteries; one sighed to look again and divine.

The breeze blew rebellious strands of hair towards him.

A faint odor of violets drifted with them. He liked the way her white sweater was buttoned cozily under her chin.

"Everything seemed to be neatly apportioned, with no portion for me," she said, laughingly. "Sallie had the bishop on her hands; the friends I came down with I like too well to be always in evidence as Mlle. de Trop; and I assume that you know Dicky Ayres?"

"I do," said Houston, understandingly.

"I became a forced adherent to the charms of solitude," she went on, demurely. "The canoe looked inviting, and I was enjoying myself rarely when the paddle broke. Then I began to drift towards Walhalla. When I saw you, I knew that the Walküre cry would carry farther than anything else, beside being by all odds the proper thing. So here I am," she said, gayly. "We'll have a glorious run in."

Her unconventional way of accepting the situation, her pluck, and her undeniable charm, fired Houston to keen admiration.

"It's the first time I have ever had the honor of rescuing a Walküre," he said, whimsically. "I've admired them at a distance at the Metropolitan, and over in great old Munich. Will you

permit your Viking to give himself a local habitation and a name?"

She laughed ripplingly.

"I know you," she said. "I know all kinds of things about you. You're a much talked of young man. The daily press has achieved some wood cuts, in which it is quite possible to trace a resemblance, and an astonishing number of your photographs have taken to frames lately. They say," her voice dropped, teasingly and mysteriously, "but I suppose you know what they say."

"What?" he said, boyishly. Her voice was a delight. The alphabet would have been music; but to hear her talk of himself was Beethoven.

"They say you cannot be bribed or bought," she said; "that you are not afraid of the combined wealth and power of a very great corporation. We've heard," her tone grew serious, and admiration crept in subtly, "how you led your men through a mine which the opposing forces had threatened to blow up before you should be allowed to investigate it. We've heard how you stood by your men, and worked with them one dreadful winter, and how, when relief came, they lifted you to their shoulders, and marched through the camp, singing 'America,' those Swedes, and Danes, and Poles, and Cornishmen—every nationality *but* Americans—because you meant to them all that America should mean."

Her eyes shone, and her tone sounded with something of the swing of battle.

It was very sweet to Houston's ears. Only the strong man knows how hard it is always to be strong. There are nights of discouragement which must be ignored in the daylight, and the zest of the bravest battle flags at times, though it may not flag outwardly.

It seemed to him now that he could do miracles with such a spur.

He sent the boat spinning through the water. Then he remembered that haste would bring them nearer home, and went on a wide tack at once.

"I feel as though I'd had the Victoria Cross tied on the Legion of Honour," he said; and the depth of his

emotion showed through the lightness of his tone. "Haven't you at least a red ribbon for my buttonhole?"

Her mood tuned with his. She laughed infectiously. Her dainty hands loosened the white sweater at her throat. He caught a glimpse of an immaculate turn-over collar. Underneath it a scarlet ribbon was tied as a cravat.

"Give me your pocketknife," she commanded.

Houston produced and opened it promptly.

She cut off a superfluous end deftly. The dash of scarlet gypsified her face. The velvety-brown eyes looked almost black. It was even an improvement on the way they had looked before. Houston would not have admitted the possibility a moment earlier.

"Now," she said, "Knight of the Western Wilds, we decorate you in token of our royal pleasure."

Houston bent towards her. She fastened the ribbon in his coat. It was a delicious moment. To think of man-aging the boat at such a time seemed the refinement of cruelty.

A tress of perfumed hair blew against his face. He caught his breath swiftly. He wished that he might again rescue her from peril. He wished the other rescue had lasted longer. Then life simplified. He knew what had come to him. It seemed as though it could never have been any other way.

"You," he breathed; but every endearing adjective in the language followed the monosyllable in his mind.

She glanced at him questioningly, the smile of amusement over her handiwork still on her lips.

"I beg pardon," said Houston, gravely. "You see, I never took hold of an electric wire before. Tremendous voltage."

"Electric wire?" she said, wonderingly.

He leaned across and touched the rebellious tress. He did not linger over it. It seemed the merest gesture. Then he smiled at her.

"And the current holds," he said. "Isn't that curious? Didn't you suppose that if a man let go of a live wire

he was out of danger? Not a word of truth in it. You keep getting the full voltage."

The girl's face changed slightly. It took on a tinge of convention, of the world, an indefinable suggestion of being on guard.

"I don't know a thing about electricity, but I *am* interested in the West," she said. "Suppose you tell me about that."

There was no suggestion of prudery, of rebuke. It sounded quite natural, with the naturalness of art.

It did not deceive Houston, but it suited him.

"You will go West some day," he said, "and you will like it better than any other place in the world. You can't help it. It's so big and square and sane. We have a superior sun, and a far more artistic moon, and our present selections of stars is like the circus posters, 'the greatest aggregation of combined beauty ever seen under one tent.' It's in the air. You can see straighter and farther than anywhere else. You'd like the long rides between places—the restfulness of space—and the wonderful old hills. The mining camps are picturesque for all their crudities, with their funny mixture of nationalities, a dozen dialects to every three hundred men.

"And when night comes on, and the old hills that we've hacked and scarred till they are a trifle raw by day, begin to twinkle into cabin lights, I like to stand in the doorway of my big, rambling place up on the crest of the hill, and look down upon it all. It's the nearest one can get to the Napoleonic feeling. I have a great fireplace in my living room, where we heap up the logs till the sparks go up the chimney like the torch of liberty. You can dream in the big chairs there, when the day's work is over. Sometimes you hear a sound at the window, and a mountain lion looks in. Perhaps you would rather I pulled down the curtain," he said, and there was a laughing tenderness in his eyes that gave his words a fuller meaning.

"Oh," she said, enthusiastically,

"what a place to go gypsying in! Do you remember:

"Through the trails till night was falling,  
Gay they swung with buoyant stride,  
For the wander blood was calling,  
And the romance world was wide?"

Houston nodded. He was superbly happy. The wind stung him to a zest for conquest; the boat responded throbbingly to his dominant touch; and he had found, wondrously, the girl whom God had made for him.

He bent forward to look her full in the face, as he finished the verse.

"Best beside the camp fire flaming,  
With his love his arm within,  
And her lips' full crimson shaming,  
Pale the kerchief 'neath her chin."

In spite of herself, the girl felt the color come into her face, but she looked at him frankly.

"It has a wonderful swing to it, hasn't it?" she said, pleasantly.

Houston bent a little nearer to her. His eyes held hers tenaciously.

"When will you marry me?" he said. "We must live it out together."

It was to him the only simple, the only natural thing. The rest of the world seemed blotted out. They two, in the boat, were the only human beings. It was the voice of primitive man speaking to primitive woman.

The girl looked startled, then amused. Then she laughed, and her laughter had the ripple of a mountain brook.

"I am sorry to dampen your ardor," she said, gayly, "but wouldn't you experience a slight difficulty in having your license made out? Or does the lavish chivalry of the West politely ignore the name of the bride?"

She wanted to temporize, to turn aside, jokingly, this surprising young man. She told herself that since he had saved her life, she must not be offended with him. More than that she would not acknowledge to herself.

"No difficulty at all," said Houston, promptly. "Do you want to see Sherlock Holmes at work. You came out in one of the Burton's boats; therefore, you are an invited guest; besides, you said so. I have seen the list. I have

met all but two of the ladies. You are not Miss Wainright; therefore you must be Miss Ten Broek."

She laughed amusedly.

"Why shouldn't I be Miss Wainright?" she asked. "What have you heard of her that makes it impossible?"

"She is Frank Wainright's daughter," said Houston, decidedly. "And though she were a decidedly charming young woman, she would naturally possess some of the paternal traits. You haven't one of them, but you have something of your father's disposition. And then," he touched a neatly darned place in the white knitted jacket, "it's beautifully darned," he said. "I think that one little place is the ornament of the whole thing. I want you to be sure and bring it West with you, and the little touch of crimson underneath your chin. But Miss Wainright wouldn't keep it in her wardrobe. John Ten Broek's daughter," he said, and his voice was very tender, "I love you."

"And that," he added, gently, "is only half of it. What about your half?"

There was a strength in his tone that brought her eyes swiftly to his, and they betrayed her. She went scarlet. She pulled herself together with an effort.

"Don't you think you have said quite enough?" she said, and the voice she strove to make lightly amused, shook with the emotion she was trying to control. "Perhaps it's just as well we're almost in. Will you be good now, please?"

They were a hundred feet from the deserted landing, but he swerved the boat so that the sail hid them completely from the shore.

"Will you take the tiller a second?" he said, coolly. She put her hand on it promptly.

The next instant he had covered it with his own.

"As Isaac and Rebecca," he breathed. His voice was a half whisper.

Then he released the little hand.

"You've given me the most wonderful thing in the world to be good for all the rest of my life," he said, tenderly.

Then he brought the boat deftly to the landing, and stood ready to help her out.

She stood poised undecidedly for an instant, looking at him intently.

Then she spoke.

"If it had been Evelyn Wainright," she said. "What would you have done?"

"It couldn't have been Evelyn Wainright," he said, positively.

"Very easily," said the girl, steadily. "She is as fond of the water as I am. She paddles quite as well. I have known her to attempt the Walküre cry. Wouldn't it have stopped the feud?"

"Never," said Houston, firmly. "A man may not sell his honor, even for love. If I had fallen in love with Evelyn Wainright, I would not marry her. So thank the gods that we have not to reproduce the drama of 'Romeo and Juliet.' As it is, dear little Walküre," his voice grew tenderly merry, "I shall insist on taking you out to dinner to-night, and out on the south terrace after dinner, and out on the water to-morrow, *und so weiter*, until you decide to marry me and go West."

She smiled at him.

"Perhaps," she said, lightly; "but now you are going to stay and tie up your boat. I am going up to the house alone."

She stepped swiftly on the seat, and steadied herself an instant with her hand on his shoulder.

"As my lady wishes," he said. That light touch was very sweet to him.

"Good-by, dear Viking," breathed the girl.

Then she disappeared swiftly down the winding walk.

Houston busied himself, outwardly, with the boat; inwardly, he was seeing visions and dreaming dreams; and the lilt of a rhyme he remembered vaguely, swung through his mind.

On the foam of the sea, just at morn,  
On the crest of a wave, love was born.

"The old codger who wrote that, got his time of day all mixed up," he commented, severely. "I call that mighty careless of him."

The mind of man is peculiarly constituted.

To Houston, pacing rapturously up and down beneath the old oaks, the first suspicion came with the sharpness of physical pain.

"If it had been Evelyn Wainright," and Sallie Burton's "She's not a bit like her father."

"We've heard of you as fighting a great corporation." There was nothing partisan in that. Nor in her enthusiasm over his standing by his men. That might appeal even to Frank Wainright's daughter.

He racked his brains to remember one sentence that savored of disapproval of the Wainright side of the controversy. Not one. "She paddles quite as well. I've known her to attempt the Walküre cry." Was she trying to tell him? Had he been unconsciously a brute. "She's not a bit like her father." It began to pound through his head. "If," he said, as Sallie Burton had said, but he said it with a groan. It began, as the moments slipped by, to assume a hideous possibility.

Why should Isabel Ten Broek have suggested the question? Might not Evelyn, with a girl's ignorance of business, have thought romantically that this would reconcile her father and her lover? Houston went white. There was her side of it. She loved him. She would suffer as he should suffer if he had to give her up.

Frank Wainright's face came clearly before him: cold, calculating, crafty with a hypocritical smoothness. Frank Wainright would not object. A compromise was all he could hope for now. Frank Wainright was quite capable of assigning to heaven the responsibility for such a peaceful outcome. As Frank Wainright's son-in-law, he would have his wings neatly clipped. And the world would be divided into two opinions; that, turning fearful, he had been knave enough to snatch at such a chance; or that, being unbuyable by ordinary methods, John Wainright had conceived this plan astutely for his downfall.

Honor held him to his cause, to his



miners. But he struck his fist against a tree with a desperate impotence as the look in her eyes came back to him.

He loved her. If he loved Isabel Ten Broek, life stretched out like a lengthening vista towards Paradise; if he loved Evelyn Wainright, he would have to face a bitterness beyond the bitterness of death, alone. The clock in the distant village chimed the hour.

He must go and dress for dinner. He would know then. And he sent a voiceless prayer to Heaven that knowledge might be relief and not despair.

It befell that, hurry as he would, he was a bit late for dinner. The others were all in the great living hall which was the feature of the house, as he came down the stairs. It had turned cool. A brushwood fire blazed in the wide fireplace. The gay chatter and the lilt of laughter were alien sounds. He could hear Billy Burton's cheerful laugh, and Dicky Ayres' snigger.

Sallie Burton smiled up at him. She was in her element. A girl standing by the fireplace talking to the bishop, suddenly lost the trend of the Episcopal

remarks; but she smiled at him so comprehensively the next instant that the bishop, who had a portly placidity, thought her as intelligent a listener as she was pleasing to the eye.

"There are some people I want you to meet before dinner," murmured Sallie.

Houston followed her with the feeling of a man going to his execution.

She led him straight where the girl and the bishop stood. The girl was beautifully gowned—a white chiffon and lace creation. Her eyes met his inscrutably.

"You cannot be allowed to monopolize the bishop this way," said Sallie Burton to the girl with mock indignation. "He will forget presently that he has to take his hostess out to dinner."

"He could forget nothing so delightful," the bishop responded valiantly.

"Miss Ten Broek," said Sallie, "Mr. Houston is to be your cavalier. May I present him?"

Then the bishop and Sallie Burton doubted the evidence of their own ears, for what they thought they couldn't have heard Houston say to Miss Isabel Ten Broek was: "God is good."



## CREATION

GOD made an awful lot of things;  
Some summers, several thousand Springs,—  
The morning and the afternoon,  
The sky, the mist, the sea, the moon;  
The south wind and the new-mown hay,  
The mountain brook and ocean spray.

And then there are some things, you see,  
That God made specially for me;  
Red roses, yellow daffodils,  
The shadows on the purple hills,—  
A cobweb, pearled with morning dew;  
A certain shining star,—and you.

CAROLYN WELLS.

# PELEG MYRICK'S PIANO

By Joseph C. Lincoln

Author of "Cap'n Eri," "Cape Cod Ballads," Etc.

## I.



IN the "Who's Who" book he is Adolphus Pettibone, capitalist; in the "Street" he is called "Uncle 'Dolph"; the sensational journals hail him as the "Tea-Lead King;" down in the vicinity of Gull Harbor he is, behind his back, "Old Pettibone." He sat in what the architect of his summer mansion had called the library, two or three vials containing dyspepsia remedies on the table by his side and a fat cigar in his hand. He waved the cigar and spoke thus to the young man standing at the end of the table:

"Yes, sir, I have decided objections to your calling on my niece. Your character may be all right—I never heard that it wasn't. It isn't because you're not rich, either—I'm a self-made man myself."

The young man—his name, by the way, was Harry Bradley—looked as if he had heard something like this before.

"I'm self-made myself," continued the great Pettibone, "and that ain't it, but I've watched you ever since your father spoke to me that time before he died. He left you about ten thousand dollars and you're earning enough to keep you without touching that. What have you done with the money he left you? Nothing."

"It wasn't a large sum," replied Bradley, "and it was bringing in a fair rate of interest. I didn't feel justified in disturbing it."

"If you'd had what I call the business sense," declared the "Tea-Lead King," rolling back in his chair, "you'd have doubled that money before now. When I was your age I didn't have ten thousand, but what I did have was making more fast; don't forget that. But you haven't got the business sense, and that's why I don't want you to call on Agnes any longer. Of course, I know that's why you are spending your vacation in this part of the country, but I can't help that. Well," he pulled out his watch, "I guess that's all. I've got to catch the train. I've got an important meeting to attend to-morrow morning. Agnes is going with me. Good-afternoon."

Mr. Bradley didn't see anything to be gained by staying longer, so he walked out of the room and out of the house. As he passed down the drive a handkerchief was waved to him from an upper window. He waved a hand in reply.

"John," said Adolphus Pettibone, a little later, as he stood on the back steps. "I'm going to row across to the station. Miss Somers will go with me. We shan't need you. I shall be back in two or three days."

The Pettibone house at Gull Harbor hasn't a neighbor for over a mile. "Uncle 'Dolph" put it there partially on that account. "When I want rest, I want rest," he said.

As Miss Somers and her uncle came down the long flight of steps to the beach there was nothing in sight on the blue waters of the bay but a steam yacht moving slowly a mile or two out. The

pair stepped into the skiff and the young lady settled herself at the oars. She rowed well, and they were soon beyond the point and out of sight of their own or any other house. Mr. Pettibone suddenly demanded that his niece give up rowing.

"Let me take her," he said.

"But, uncle, it's a long pull yet, and I'm not tired."

"Give me the oars! Maybe I can work off this confounded dyspepsia."

Miss Somers obediently moved to the stern of the boat and her uncle sat down heavily on the rower's thwart. In fact, he sat down so heavily that he knocked one of the oars overboard. In trying to reach it he knocked the other overboard. There was a steady off-shore wind.

## II.

Just at dusk that summer evening—it was the evening of the sixth of July—Peleg Myrick sat on the overturned mackerel tub outside the door of his shanty and looked at the bay, now slowly darkening. From where he sat he could see over three-quarters of Wrack Island; the other quarter was hidden by the grove of scrub pines on the little hill. He saw his catboat at anchor by the landing. He saw the dory that he had been repairing turned bottom up on the beach. He saw a purple smear on the horizon, the mainland of the cape. All the rest of the view was salt water; there was no other house than his own in sight and no other human being, for Peleg was a modern hermit, living alone on that little sand island, getting his living by fishing and clamming, and his amusement from his fiddle and his pipe.

He went into the shanty and brought out the fiddle. One string was broken, but he couldn't get another until he made his next trip to Wellmouth, so there was no use worrying about that. He settled the fiddle beneath his chin, crooked his elbow and began to play "Mrs. McLeod's Reel." A stub-tailed dog came out of the shanty, sat down deliberately and began to howl a doleful accompaniment. Peleg rose and calmly picked up

a quahaug shell, but before he could throw it, the dog tucked his stub tail as far between his legs as its length would permit and fled for the pines. This performance was a regular thing, and it did not greatly disturb the musician's equanimity. The "Reel" began again.

Now Peleg had a musical soul, although you might not have guessed it from his present performance, and he had higher aspirations than fiddle playing. His one desire was to own a piano, an upright, shiny-cased piano. He didn't know how to play one, but he could learn, he believed. The shanty wasn't big enough to contain such an instrument, but he could build an addition. It would be a job to get a piano to Wrack Island, but his friend, the skipper of the lighthouse supply steamer, had said that he would help him in this respect. Peleg knew just what kind of a piano he wanted—he had selected it from the many in the catalogue; the trouble was that he couldn't save money fast enough, for fishing and clamming do not pay very well, particularly when one prefers to sit in the sun rather than work. So now, as he automatically sawed at the three-stringed fiddle, the longed-for piano looked very far away.

Suddenly from the grove into which the dog had disappeared came a frantic barking. Then some one from a distance called "Help!" Mr. Myrick threw down the fiddle and ran as fast as his rubber boots would permit toward the other end of the island.

The heavy thunder shower of the previous hour had passed, but there was a steady breeze and the sea was specked with little whitecaps. About two hundred yards from the beach below the pines was a rowboat, low in the water, and drifting before the wind. A fat man, attired in a blue serge suit, with a white shawl about his shoulders, was sitting in the stern of the boat and howling "Help!" at the top of his lungs. The stub-tailed dog, standing with his paws in the surf, was barking a reply.

"What's the matter with you?" shouted Peleg.

Then another figure rose in the boat,

that of a young lady. She had a tin pail in her hand and she poured something from it over the side.

"Help!" huskily roared the fat man.

"What's the row?" bellowed Peleg.

"We're adrift and the boat's sinking.

Help us, please." It was the young lady that answered. Mr. Myrick wasted no time in replying. He ran as hard as he could back to the catboat; jumping in, he hurriedly hoisted the sail and pulled up the anchor. He could hear the fat man still shouting.

The catboat sailed out of the cove, came about and bore down upon the skiff. As she ran alongside, Peleg reached out and caught the little craft with one big hand. The fat man climbed aboard in a moment. The young lady dropped the tin pail—she had been bailing with it—and followed suit. The skiff had a good deal of water in her.

"Where's your oars?" demanded Mr. Myrick.

"We lost them overboard," answered the young lady, whose dress was dripping wet. "We've drifted all the way from Gull Harbor. This is Mr. Pettibone," indicating the shivering gentleman in the serge suit, "and I am his niece. The skiff leaks dreadfully and I've had to bail all the way. I don't know what we should have done if you hadn't picked us up."

"For Heaven's sake!" growled the stout man, "Agnes, are you going to talk all night? Have the man get us ashore. I'm nearly frozen to death."

But Peleg was not to be hurried. He had taken a dislike to his male visitor already. He knew in a vague way who he was; rumors of the great summer mansion at Gull Harbor, with its drives and walled grounds, had come to him, but further than that he didn't know nor care. He didn't like "summer folks," anyhow.

"Jest hold on a minute, mister," he drawled. "Let me hitch a line onto the skiff."

"Hang the skiff! Do you want me to freeze?"

There was no reply to this. Peleg deliberately made the line fast to the stern

of the catboat and then stood in for the cove.

"Go right up to the house there," he commanded, as his visitors stepped ashore. "I'll be along in a minute, soon's I've got this boat moored."

"Is that the house?" sarcastically inquired Mr. Pettibone, pointing to the shanty.

"That's the house."

When, a few minutes later, the hermit appeared in the doorway of his domicile, he found the young lady standing by the cookstove, while the stout man was seated in the only respectable chair, his feet on the hearth and the shawl still wrapped about his shoulders.

"Come, come!" he snapped, turning his head in the direction of the newcomer, "put some more wood on the fire. Can't you see I'm half frozen?"

When a man has been monarch of all he surveys for some ten years it grates upon him to be ordered about in this fashion, especially in his own house. Peleg was about to make some sarcastic rejoinder, but the young lady looked at him beseechingly and he said nothing further than to growl that he would fix the fire in a minute.

He went outside to get the wood from the pile at the back of the shanty and the young lady followed.

"You mustn't mind uncle," she whispered. "He's a little quick-tempered, but he means well. It's his dyspepsia; it troubles him dreadfully. Besides, think what he has been through."

"Humph! Guess you've been through jest as much, haven't you?" with a significant look at her soaked garments.

"Yes, but I'm younger than he is, and besides, I haven't the dyspepsia."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Myrick once more, and carried in the wood.

The fire blazed and crackled, and the little living room of the shanty grew so hot that it was almost unbearable, but Mr. Pettibone still hugged the stove. Peleg lit the kerosene lamp and pulled the pine table out from the wall.

"Guess you'll want somethin' to eat, won't you?" he asked, turning to the young lady.

"Why, if we might have some hot tea?" she suggested.

"For goodness' sake, Agnes! What are you thinking of?" exclaimed her uncle. "I should think something to wear was the first essential. How much longer must I sit around like a drowned rat?"

Peleg dropped the tin teakettle on the table with a bang.

"Well, I——" he began, but stopped, looked at the young lady's alarmed face, and silently climbed the ladder to the loft overhead, where he slept. In a moment he descended again.

"There's my Sunday suit up aloft there," he said, shortly. "Mebbe you can squeeze into it. I've lit the lamp."

Mr. Pettibone looked at the ladder—it was nothing but a row of narrow boards nailed crosswise to the uprights of the shanty—and gasped.

"D'you think I'm going to climb that thing?" he demanded.

"I cal'late you'll have to unless you want to sleep on the table to-night. All the beds there is are up there."

"Sleep! you don't suppose I'm going to sleep in this hole to-night. I'll put on some dry clothes and eat something, and then you can sail us over to my place at Gull Harbor."

"I wouldn't sail to Gull Harbor to-night, for no man alive—nor no woman either," said Peleg, defiantly. "It's all of ten mile, and there's more shoals'n you can shake a stick at. I won't do it; that's all there is to it. To-morrer forenoon, after I've hauled my nets and cleaned the fish, I'll take you 'cross in the catboat."

"After you've cleaned—— Why, you confounded rascal, do you realize who you're talking to? I've got a meeting to-morrow in Boston that I must attend—*must*, do you understand that?"

"Fish'll spile if they ain't cleaned right off."

"Damn your fish! I must be at that meeting."

"I can't afford to spile a day's catch. Squeteague's runnin' purty fair now and I'm likely to have a good haul. I wouldn't resk haulin' for less'n fifteen

dollars. If you want to pay that, why——"

"Fifteen dollars! Why, you robber, I can hire a boat and man all day for five!"

"My price is fifteen without haulin'. I won't charge nothin' after the work's done."

"Uncle!" broke in Miss Somers, "don't you think you had better pay the fifteen? His fish mean as much to him, perhaps, as your meeting does to you."

"Agnes, don't be ridiculous! I never have been bulldozed and I won't be now. Just because I've got money every countryman thinks I'm ready to be robbed. Look here, you! I'll pay six dollars and not one cent more."

"Fifteen's my price," said Peleg, sullenly.

For once "Uncle 'Dolph" had met a man as stubborn as he was, and his own stubbornness was proverbial. He argued, commanded and threatened, but all in vain. Finally, he gave it up and groaningly climbed the ladder to the loft, where, judging by the grunts and profanity, he appeared to be having some trouble in getting into Mr. Myrick's "Sunday suit."

Peleg went into the little shed and came back with a dripping salt mackerel from the "pickle tub." Then he got out some cold slabs of "spider-bread" and split them in halves preparatory to toasting.

"Can't I help you?" inquired Miss Somers.

"You might make the tea if you want to. Kittle's on the table. Tea's in that termatter can on the beam there, and there's water in the rain barrel by the door. I wish I had some clothes for you, but I ain't. I ain't had no call for 'em, so I never bought none," he added, apologetically.

The young lady said it was no matter; she was almost dry already. She explained that they had taken no baggage because they had intended going directly to their Boston home. Then she said, in a low tone: "I wish you *would* take us over in the morning. I'll pay the fifteen dollars myself."

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" The

shout came down through the hatchway. "That man gets six dollars and no more. Come here, you—whatever your name is—and help me down this ladder."

"Help yourself," said Peleg, shortly. "I'm busy."

A pair of stout legs arrayed in skin-tight pepper and salt trousers, the latter at "half-mast," appeared at the top of the ladder. Then, perspiring and groaning, the rest of the Pettibone figure followed the legs. Mr. Myrick was thin and "Uncle 'Dolph" was fat, and the "Sunday suit" was, to say the least, a tight fit.

Supper was soon ready. The spider-bread, hot and soggy, was on the table, as was also the salt mackerel, fried in pork fat, and the tea. There was condensed milk in the original can and sugar in a broken mug.

"Uncle," exclaimed Agnes, "you're not going to eat that fish? Think of your dyspepsia."

"Suppose I'm going to starve?" demanded the old gentleman, his mouth full. "Of course I'm going to eat it."

After supper Peleg washed the dishes. Then Mr. Pettibone observed that he was going to bed.

There were two bunks in the loft, one at each side, and Mr. Myrick contrived to rig up a curtain—it was an extra blanket—between them. The guests climbed the ladder and their host sat down to ponder. He got out the fiddle and essayed a tune, but a howl from the loft cut it short.

"What kind of a devilish noise is that?" roared the Tea-Lead magnate. "Stop it this minute!"

This thrust in the tenderest part of his affections was very close to the final straw, but Peleg thought of the young lady and swallowed his wrath, charging it to the Pettibone account, however. Then he threw off his outer garments, improvised a bed on the floor from an old fish net and some oil skins and turned in for the night.

He was awakened early in the morning by the noise Mr. Pettibone made in descending the ladder. To Peleg's question as to where he was going, the

visitor replied that he was going out of doors where he could smell something besides fish. Mr. Myrick, being thoroughly awake by this time, sat up on the heap of net and oil skins and lazily began to dress.

Suddenly he heard the little window of the loft thrown open and Miss Somers' voice as she called, in apparent alarm: "Uncle! Uncle 'Dolph! What are you doing in that boat? Where are you going?"

The word "boat" acted on Peleg like a springboard. He bounded into the middle of the room and shot out of the door. And that is what he saw:

The catboat with sail set and anchor apeak, was moving toward the entrance of the cove. At the tiller sat Adolphus Pettibone, with serene confidence and triumph beaming from his expansive face.

"Don't be alarmed, Agnes," he called, patronizingly. "I know what I'm about. I shall sail over to Gull Harbor and catch the morning train, and I'll send some one back after you. Well," he shouted, as Peleg came racing to the beach, "you see what you get by trying to rob a man, don't you? You won't be paid even the six now. There ain't many that get ahead of me, I'll tell you that."

But Mr. Myrick paid no attention to this taunt. Instead, he jumped up and down and waved his arms.

"Look out!" he bellowed. "Keep her off! Off! Off-shore, you lubber! There's a rock there! Keep her off, I tell you! Oh, by Judas! *there you go!*"

Now Mr. Pettibone was, in some degree, used to a boat, but he wasn't acquainted with the waters of Wrack Island cove. The word "rock" frightened him, and, instead of "keeping her off," he pushed the tiller the wrong way. The catboat headed nearer to shore; there was a shock and a muffled, ripping crash. The boat stopped with a jerk, and began to sink, as well she might, for there was a two-foot hole in her side.

"Oh, help him!" screamed Miss Somers. "He'll drown!"

The catboat sank more swiftly, and suddenly her stern went under. But it



sank only a foot or two, hung on the sloping rock and then capsized. With a shriek the capitalist went out of sight, but he reappeared in a moment, spluttering. The water only reached his shoulders.

"Wade ashore, you thunderin' idiot!" bellowed Peleg.

The command was obeyed, and when the dripping Adolphus reached the beach he was met by such a hurricane of abuse as he had not heard since he was a boy mule-driver on the towpath.

"You everlastin', bald-headed fool of a sculpin!" roared Mr. Myrick. "Now you've done it for sure. That leaky skiff of yours ain't fit to go another mile in; my dory's out of commission and you've stove the catboat. I cal-late you'll stay on this island for one spell now. Shut up! I don't want to hear a word out of you. Wade in there ag'in and help me get her off the rocks or I'll hold your mud head under till you've drowned. Come—move!"

And the "Tea-Lead King" obeyed, while the stub-tailed dog barked desirively.

### III.

Harry Bradley went up to Loon Pond after pickerel that day. He had another week of vacation, and he thought he might as well make the most of it. His interview with the great Pettibone had resulted very much as he expected, but it was not worrying him greatly, for he knew the young lady's sentiments and believed that in time he would win even in defiance of the autocratic uncle. The latter's taunt concerning the lack of "business sense" did irritate him, however.

He returned to the village about six o'clock that evening, and, seeing a bigger crowd than usual at the post office, stopped to ascertain the cause. Any-one of a dozen was willing to tell him.

"Old Pettibone's skipped out," declared Ira Perry, waving a copy of a Boston newspaper. "Skipped out or drowned, they ain't sure which, though most folks thinks he's skipped. Seems he left his place over at the harbor to

row 'crost to the deepot and catch the train to Boston. His niece—that Somers girl—went with him. There's a whole lot 'bout it in the paper. Seems the Tea-Lead folks was goin' to have a meetin' to-day—mighty important—somethin' 'bout a dividend. They say the company's been losin' money and that maybe old Pettibone's cleared out a-purpose. Anyhow, there was a steam yacht off here yesterday and she went away last night. The stock market's crazy—all sorts of stories 'round. Tea-Lead Common's gone down much as twenty dollars a share. Bill Daniels has got home and he says there ain't no truth in it, but—"

The young man didn't wait to hear another word. He threw his fishing tackle over a fence and ran every step of the way to Gull Harbor. There he found another crowd, wildly excited. Reporters were among them. From one of the latter he learned that no trace of the skiff or its occupants had yet been found.

"They're goin' to get a steam launch and start on a regular search," said the newspaper man, "but it isn't worth while, I think. There have been all sorts of rumors about the Tea-Lead Company for some time, and now the old man's gone. That yacht being here yesterday makes it all the more fishy. It would be a mighty good time to buy the stock if it should be straight, after all," he added.

Later in the evening, Bradley, haggard and alone, in a sailboat, was cruising aimlessly about the bay in the moonlight. The launch had not yet arrived. He sailed farther and farther from shore; suddenly in the distance he saw the low, black line of Wrack Island and steered for it, but without hope. As he came close in by the pines on the little hill a dog began to bark.

"Boat ahoy!" shouted some one from the shore.

The young man hailed in reply.

"Have you seen anything of a skiff with two people in it last night or this morning?" he asked.

"Well, I should say I had!" was the answer, in a tone of deep disgust.

"Oh, Harry! is that you?" called another voice—a feminine voice.

Mr. Myrick had the good taste to turn away when the young man stepped ashore. When he did face the newcomer, the latter asked him: "And where is Mr. Pettibone?"

"Oh, he's in bed, curled up with dyspepsy. I cal'late the salt mack'rel didn't set well. You can't git him away too soon for me."

Mr. Bradley, with Miss Somers on his arm, took a few steps in the direction of the shanty. Then he suddenly stopped.

"By George!" he exclaimed, and then repeated it. His next remark was the apparently inexplicable question: "Agnes, do you believe you could content yourself on this island for one more day?"

"Why, Harry! I don't know what—"

But Mr. Bradley interrupted her with an eagerly whispered explanation that seemed to be a lengthy one. She replied just as eagerly. Then, after a little more conversation, still in whispers, the young man turned to Peleg.

"Mr. Myrick," he said, "what price would you charge to keep Miss Somers and her uncle at your house here until to-morrow evening?"

"Price! The lady's all right, but I wouldn't keep that—that everlastin', cross-grained, pigheaded old critter here another hour for nobody; not unless I had to."

"But Mr. Myrick," it was Miss Somers that spoke, "wouldn't you keep us here another day if—well, if Mr. Bradley should pay you enough to buy a piano?"

"Enough to buy a pi—enough to buy a piano? What are you talkin' 'bout?"

"Look here, Myrick," said Harry, "there is a reason why I don't want Mr. Pettibone to leave this island yet. If you'll keep him and this young lady as boarders until to-morrow night, when they will be called for, and if you can arrange it so that no one will know they are here until that time, I'll pay for the best piano you can buy. Is it a trade?"

"Gosh!" exclaimed Peleg, staring into

the speaker's face. "Do you mean it? Gosh! You *bet* it's a trade."

Two hours later the steam launch passed Wrack Island. Peleg hailed her from the point below the pines.

"What are you cruisin' round for this time of night?" he asked.

"Did a skiff pass here with two people in it last night or this morning?" asked some one from the launch.

"There ain't no skiff passed this island," answered Mr. Myrick.

It will be noticed that he was speaking the exact truth.

#### IV.

If the reader is a bull, or a bear, or a lamb—yes, even if his acquaintance with the Wall Street Zoo is no closer than that obtained through the daily papers, he will remember with what a "boom" the stock market opened on the morning of the ninth of July. "Tea-Lead Common" went up and up like a skyrocket. The reason of this ascension was that Adolphus Pettibone had been found. The papers were full of it. He had been found the night before by a young man named Bradley, who discovered the capitalist and his niece upon an island whither they had drifted in the skiff. That afternoon the deferred meeting of the Consolidated Tea-Lead Company was held, and the statement made public showed the corporation's business to be in such a flourishing condition that the price of its stock soared still higher.

On the following Monday the "Tea-Lead King" received an unexpected call at his office from Harry Bradley.

"I have been thinking over what you said to me in our interview of last week," said the young man, "and I called to tell you that I have acted upon your advice. I put all of my ten thousand into Tea-Lead Common at about the lowest figure it touched on the eighth. As I bought on margin, I got hold of a good deal. I have since closed it out at a profit sufficient to more—a good deal more—than double my capital. I thought I would tell you this because I knew you would

be glad to see that I had developed the 'business sense.'"

"Humph!" grunted the astonished Adolphus, "I don't know about that, either. Seems to me you took a good deal of risk. How did you know that the stories of my running away weren't true?"

"Oh, I didn't buy until I had found out where you were. You see, I called at Wrack Island on the evening of the seventh and——"

"You did! You *did*? Where was I?"

"I believe you were in bed fighting the dyspepsia, and I thought another day's rest and——and plain food would do you good."

"Well, of all the—— Get out of this office! Plain food! Get out, before I——"

Mr. Bradley was just opening the street door when a hurrying office boy caught up with him.

"Mr. Pettibone wants to see you again," said the boy.

Harry entered the sanctum rather cautiously. But the great man offered no violence. Instead, there was a grim smile on his face.

"See here, young man," he said, "I don't know but that you've got more business sense than I gave you credit for. Sit down. I want to talk with you."

If you are down in that vicinity next summer it will pay you to sail over to Wrack Island and hear Peleg Myrick play "Mrs. McLeod's Reel" on his new piano. The piano is a "hummer"—Peleg says so.



## LIFE

ME, in the midst of dateless centuries,  
By Love concealed,  
Now, newly swathed in mortal destinies,  
Hath Time revealed.

A breathing space, a silence— and, behold,  
What I have been.  
Unswathed, the circling centuries enfold,  
Again unseen!

With Days and Nights brief brotherhood  
Was mine: But unto Thee  
I come, a child inseparably thine, —  
Eternity.

JOHN B. TABB.

# THE OUT TRAIL

By S. Carleton

Author of "The Ribbioned Way," "The Corduroy Road," Etc.



It was not till the man had passed her that Isobel Cayley saw he had Indian blood in him. It was the deerlike set of his throat, the straight, slinging step that betrayed him, as the trail twisted on itself, and brought him back into plain sight. She had been carefully kept from Indians and their like, and she wished she could have spoken to him. She had a hunger, since she had come to this outlying mining settlement, to know what her mother's people were like. Her father was dumb about them. When he was young, and a nobody, he had married her mother; which had not mattered till they syndicated the mine, and he went into the world and became a personage.

When she died his soul was cut to the core; but his mind was easier, far easier. He had never come back to the mine till now; he had herded his daughter carefully, and never meant her to see the place. But his business there would only take him a day; he had nowhere to leave her except an hotel; and so she came to Megodik.

Cayley had to stay there for weeks instead of hours, and forgot about her. If he had remembered he would not have worried; she was, to all intents and purposes, white—pure white. She had fairish hair, and the olive skin that has carnation in it; she was biddable, mild, a lady; he had never noticed that her nails were the nails of her Indian grandmother, pink, filbert-shaped, exquisitely long and narrow. And because the mine was suddenly prospering be-

yond all the hopes of the syndicate, and the new workings were as good as Klondyke, he had no room for her in his head; anyhow, there were no Indians left round Megodik, and no chance of anyone talking to her about her mother, and the forgotten stain on her birth. But he left out one thing. The stain was no stain to his daughter; she was proud of it. The other thing he forgot was that she had wild, young blood in her on both sides.

She had seen white people all her life, Indians never; at school she had been told they were an unclean race, who usually died of consumption; but unfortunately for that doctrine she could remember her half-breed mother, dark-eyed, slender, moving like a flame; dying, when she died, of sheer heartbreak. And something in the look of the man who had passed her reminded her of that mother. She stood, staring after him along the white road where the shadows and the hoof marks were blue between the crusted shining of the untouched snow.

She wished again that she had spoken to him; and then, because he had gone along the road, turned off it. She had seen his face; she would not follow him. But off the trail were the woods, and they were unfriendly for the first time since she had come to Megodik. They had nothing to say to her that she wanted to hear.

The dead and frozen bay bushes sent up a keen scent as she crushed through them. Her mother had loved the bay, and he had been of her mother's people; the black birch twigs that she broke off as she passed tasted like wine; she knew

that chewing them could keep a man from thirst on a long day's tramp—perhaps that man might be going on one! She wanted to go, too; the hotel was dirty, the fried meat greasy, she had nothing to read—and if she went back to the road again the whole mountain side was before her. She threw down her bitten birch twigs, and took a short cut straight to Megodik, to mass; it was barely seven in the morning, and she must pray.

If the priest had spoken to her it might have been different; but he was a tired little man, who wanted his breakfast. She went to the hotel, and asked her father to take her away. She said she hated Megodik.

Cayley was pleased; but to go away was inconvenient. He promised faithfully for next week, and went off with the mine manager; his head was full of millions, and floating new stock, and the need of another mill. And so it happened that in the February sunset that was all flame and ice green, his daughter and a man came face to face.

She had gone a long way from Megodik, in the opposite direction from her stroll of the morning, and there was no sense in feeling her heart jump as she met his eyes. He stopped fairly this time, and spoke to her. The square line of his cheek was evident against the sunset, and his throat was more like a deer's than ever over the red handkerchief that filled the collar of his canvas coat. He had never seen anything quite like her, but she could not have guessed at it from his voice.

"If you don't mind," he said, slowly, "I don't think you'd better go much farther out at this time of day. It isn't any of my business, of course, but—" He thought angrily that Cayley did not deserve to have a daughter. She looked too lonely, too—

"Why not?" she cut off his thought sharply, as though she had known it. "I shan't be afraid of the dark, if that's what you mean! And I can't get lost; there's a path."

"To Indian Jack's," he assented, dryly, thinking what a beautiful thing a girl's mouth could be.

"Well, I've never seen an Indian." The mouth was not exactly malleable. "I'll go on."

"I wouldn't." He looked at her gravely; her lashes were as long as a deer's, but her glance was not so mild. "Indian Jack—" he could not tell her what Indian Jack was, but if he had to carry her she should not see the orgy going on in that brute's cabin.

"Are there other Indians there?" Her eyes had lit suddenly with more than the sunset.

"He's a white man," he replied, shortly. "Indian Jack's what they call him, because—" but he could not possibly explain. "He's white," he repeated, "and he has two other white men with him, and a keg of rum—empty."

"I'm not afraid—of white men—nor half-breeds!" Her voice was soft—and vicious; she could not have told why she wanted to hurt him. "I'll go on, thank you. Good-night!"

He nodded. With a quick change of purpose he stood aside to let her pass. But once she was out of sight it was a different thing. When she came back, white with anger, he stood in the same place; but he did not look like a man who has been waiting.

"I'll go home," she said. "Please walk—behind me. I—they might come!"

But she was not in the least afraid of them. She had gone only near enough to the dirty cabin to hear the drunken hell inside it. It was this man she feared; and he had waited for her. His eyes, his mouth, his carriage, had been burned into her this morning; and even at mass she had thought of them. She had prayed to Our Lord on The Tree that she might forget them; she had not called to the High God in Heaven, she would not have Him see. And Our Lord had not heard her—and her mother had walked in these very places.

She turned and beckoned over her shoulder. Next week she would be gone; to-night she would find out for herself what manner of man he was that walked straight-footed behind her.

"Do you live here?"

"As much as I live anywhere."

"Tell me about it," she ordered; and it seemed fit to him that she should. When he had told her she walked on in silence.

The stars were out, and it was true that people slept under them; that they lived, free and happy, in the unworn places of the earth where they knew the trees and the sky. There were the deer, too, and the cats and the lucivees; and the hundred joys of sun and moon, where it was not necessary to live in a house. And while he talked he had made a hard trail easy for her; his feet were beautiful in the soft moccasins that made no sound on the snow. She thought with uneasy anger of the man she was all but engaged to in the East and how his patent-leathered feet would look in moccasins, his dapper figure in the rough canvas of the man beside her. She had been contented enough with him, too; she had not minded marrying him.

"Don't tell me any more," she cried out. "I—it hurts me! I have to live in houses; I have never been in the woods before in my life; and my mother—was a half-breed!" She put her head up as she said it; it felt natural to tell him, he had never seemed a stranger. "You can live in this," she broke out, "so you can't think what it is—the craving for it; the getting up at night to put your head out of the window to smell the trees, over the town smoke, and the choke of it; and the life that's all alike day after day, day after day." Her voice dragged off as she thought of it. "You're a man; and I don't suppose you've ever thanked God for it! You can live where you like, go where you like—and just because I'm a woman the whole thing's shut to me. I couldn't even dare pass that trapper's cabin in the dusk; I've got to marry a man who never spent a day out of town that he could help—and be contented! I—" she stopped in shame and despair, as quick and overpowering as her impulse to frankness. She had not known how tall he was till he stood motionless in the path beside her.

"Passing Indian Jack's has nothing to

do with it," he said, coolly. "You could have passed it if you had wanted to!—but you've no right to marry a man you don't love. Don't women know that much?"

"Yes." She had not known she was breathless. "But—they—have to learn it." Her voice was dull. She stared at the silent forest, the ghosts of trees, the white path that was narrow for two people. "That's—the matter!" she whispered. "A girl always has to walk on some one else's path; it—you learn to keep shrinking, not to knock against them."

"Take your own path," he said, sharply; he knew he was speaking in a whisper, too, but not why. "Do you suppose I haven't shrunk?—it isn't only women! Take the out trail, and pay for it. Do you know I haven't slept in a house for five years, or had what you would call decent comfort—or even a soul to speak to for months at a time?—that I'm called 'the outlaw,' even out here, and wondered at? My grandmother was a Hudson Bay squaw, and my grandfather worshiped her; and so"—unsteadily—"I knew you were of the Kwedeches as soon as I laid eyes on you. I—come out into the light!" It was not fair, here in the dusky woods, where she might be afraid of him. But all the same he knew she was not afraid.

"But you've been—you're a gentleman!" She spoke out recklessly, as she had never spoken in her smooth life. "You can't be an outlaw."

"They call me one," he answered, coolly. He did not know how fast they walked over the beaten trail, nor how silently. When it broke and was lost in the frozen swamp by the road he stopped and looked at her.

Away and away from Megodik the road wound up into the mountain, where they lost sight of it. On the hilltop it was like a gateway open on the sky between crouching, wind-swept trees; and he pointed to it. Down into the gap from the zenith swung the Northern Lights in green and milky radiance out of a great arch of rose. Every polished mark of sleigh runners sent the wild lights back again, every hoof print was



full of them, beryl and jacinth set in frosted silver.

"That's the out trail!" He spoke under his breath. "It is a wide road, and it is not dark on it. And it is very free up there, when two people are of one race."

"No!" she said; she was crying. "I—I went to church—I prayed."

"It was too late to pray I should not love you. I'd seen you!" He took her fingers in his bare hand, reverently. The thought of the man she had said she was going to marry did not trouble him; he himself had thought—but now he knew! "I will give you the moon and the stars if you marry me," he said, "and, always, always the open road. Back in the States your father and the other man can give you a narrower one—you can choose! Look, and see!" He touched her elbow gently till she turned.

In the hollow before her were the kerosene lights of Megodik, the squalid rows of miners' houses, the sound of the squeaking fiddles in the crazy dance hall—and Megodik, when first she saw it, had seemed a gateway out of her world that she had never fitted. But all the same she remembered her father and the one thing that would break his heart. That set her mouth; even while she turned again, and drank with one look the out trail that found the sky.

"My father——" she began. "My father——"

"Yes, there is your father." He spoke very softly. "But I love you."

"You can't!" she said, piteously.

"Why not?" He did not lay a finger on her; it was only his eyes, and the look of his mouth. "You went to church and prayed! Come home and see your father."

There was no authority in his voice; had he not said his road was a wide one? But she did not answer him. She was not even ready to answer when they struck into the settlement and ran fairly into Cayley.

In the moment that he stared at them his daughter's heart turned over.

"What in the world——" he began; and then he jumped. "Why, Ronalds! I've been hunting the town for you. They said you'd come down. Do you know what your last strike's turned out? We're made men, the lot of us—thanks to you!" And then he was aware once more of his daughter. "Where've you been?" he inquired, jovially, "and how did you come across her?"

"I looked," said Ronalds, laconically. "You see, I saw her this morning."

"Oh!" said Cayley; he stared from one to the other. "I guess we'll talk about that," he added, grimly; but it was with a grimness his daughter knew. She ran up the hotel steps and took refuge in her bedroom. But she had not even taken off her hat by the time Cayley knocked at her door.

"I couldn't help it," she whispered, from where she sat in the dark; "I—I didn't know he was an outlaw!"

Cayley spoke to the voice, gruffly.

"I guess that's what they called him because he lived in the woods and prospected round and hunted, but he's one of the richest men in the State, too, and he's made me another; it was he opened up the new saddle veins that—but you wouldn't understand! He's the best man in the country, when you can get hold of him. He's old Ronalds' son, our biggest stockholder—but he won't live in houses. No, I'm not angry," abruptly, "if you keep on thinking what he seems to think you think," it was not confused to his hearer, "I dare say we'll call it square. He's got your——" he stopped in the sudden shock of knowledge of his daughter as she stood up against the unblinded window where the out trail—that some people call the back track—lay free. "I guess your mother would know you were happy with him; she never was, with me," he muttered. "I—I suppose only the loon knows what the loons say!"



# THE SOCIAL SIDE OF BOSTON\*

IN WHICH A LEADER OF BOSTON  
SOCIETY TELLS THE TRUTH ABOUT IT



E of Boston are apt to be credited with rather more than an ordinary degree of composure and poise which produces a certain aloofness from the rest of the world—a mental attitude often characterized by outsiders, especially in the West, by less dignified titles. And the indifference, if you please, with which these strictures from without are received here helps to confirm the impression.

If the charges are true—and we are willing to make any concessions on this subject—the reason must be looked for in that condition of serene self-complacency which attends successful maturity. For Boston, you must remember, is nearly three centuries old. English when New York was Dutch, ours is the most venerable of all the large American cities. The great West is composed of individuals, aggressive and self-assertive, who, if you attempt anything like exclusiveness, will gayly batter down your social ramparts, till the fortress of good-fellowship is taken by assault.

The warmth of the West comes mainly from her newness; because she is new she still has the roaring *camaraderie* of the pioneer days when frontiersmen looked to one another, not only for companionship, but for defense against the hazards of a precarious existence which would have made exclusiveness well-nigh suicidal.

Boston, on the other hand, long ago

outgrew her municipal baby clothes; and we have totally lost the pioneer spirit that once was ours. The city is built to stay, and with it we also stay unto the third and fourth generations. Our friends flew kites with us, read Virgil with us, came to our weddings and will lay wreaths on our tombs. Indeed, we have, in the natural course of things, rather more friends than we think we need; so why collect others? We do not lay siege to one another, and we do not much care to be besieged by others. It is not our game.

Elsewhere, however, mainly out West, communities change their jovial personnel every few years; when one has made his "pile" he goes "back to God's country;" and consequently anyone who declines to assimilate newcomers as fast as they arrive is presently left friendless. Therefore they do not understand us; they expect us to be like them, and for my own part I sometimes wish we could be; but, alas! we've forgotten how!

Yes, forgotten. Time has worked a change in us till "Boston is no longer an American city." Moreover, time has done another thing; it has divided us up into sets. "Boston," says an anonymous philosopher, "is built in water-tight compartments." We suffer in consequence, but our own embarrassment is as nothing when compared with that of a newcomer who would fain plunge into the social swim. The plunge is arduous enough in itself, but the real trouble is

\* This is the second in a series of important articles on social life in American cities to be published in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE throughout the present year. An article on St. Louis will appear in the August number, to be followed by articles on the social side of such representative cities as Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco and New Orleans.—THE EDITORS.

with the swim. For there isn't any swim. Any general swim, that is. In Boston it would be difficult to find THE people, difficult to say who is "in society" and who isn't, very difficult, indeed, to get one's self regarded as socially a success. I am told that other cities are stratified, class above class; Boston's compartments are mainly on the same level, each with an ideal of its own. Other cities divide along lines of wealth, or so at least Mr. Harry Thurston Peck would have us believe. Boston divides along lines of congeniality, which is, as it seems to me, rather a decent arrangement.

Here, for instance, is a group of highly cultivated Bostonians who have pleasantly borrowed the theory and atmosphere of the French salon. Their ideals, their tastes, their amusements are all of the intellectual order. They go in for Browning, or Maeterlinck, or Kipling readings, parlor lectures on Greek art or Wagnerian opera, or the problems of the Emersonian Transcendentalism, and handsome dinners where the guests are selected for their interest in a common cause or a common idea. They welcome the "people who do things." For conversable authors, painters, musicians, actors, inventors and savants, they search the town. Lions roar in their fine houses. Some of these charming patrons of the humanities keep pet novelists or favored artists as their delighted dependents. In short, they are thoroughly Parisian, and a very glorious life they lead. Rich enough to support a generous hospitality, and influential enough to levy tribute on all that is best in American civilization, they surround themselves with the choicest spirits, and the most congenial, and fairly wallow in culture.

Now, what congeniality would you seek to find betwixt Parisian Boston and the Boston which has accepted and gayly applied the pink-coated philosophy of the English country gentleman? To have a noble estate near the Blue Hills of Milton, or somewhere on the lovely North Shore, to maintain a town house or a luxurious hotel suite, to ride to hounds, to keep a yacht (preferably not

a cup defender), to enter blooded animals at the Horse Show and some bandy-legged monstrosities at the Dog Show—all this makes up a merry existence enough, and when, as is commonly the case, it is unaccompanied by a desire to "get up features for the Sunday papers," as George Ade has it, it becomes a very respectable sort of existence. There's a lot of it, in and around Boston, and even the Parisian Bostonians regard it sympathetically. It is so decorative, so jovial, and withal so modest. But Parisian Boston doesn't court it any more than it courts Parisian Boston. On occasion, however, the two meet cordially, as friends, though hardly as cronies.

You find a third ideal in what one may perhaps best call the Old New England Bostonians. These love not society, but sociability—a very different thing sometimes. Too fond of time-tested companions to seek new and brilliant affiliations, too sure of their traditional social position to care for display, too conscious of an honorable ancestry to be either aristocratic in impulse or exclusive for caution's sake, too accustomed to their wealth to regard it as other than a pleasant convenience, they seek and obtain a quiet life, devoted to delicate enjoyments and to really lavish charities. The salon sees them seldom, the Horse Show never. They have a social world of their own.

And, of course, we have our *bourgeois* gentility, like—painfully like—that of any other place. Whist, cotillions; cotillions, whist. Receptions, dinners, teas (*tease*, Dr. Hale spells it) and all the round of conventional festivities, till, I suppose, you might fancy yourself in Kalamazoo or Sioux City. There are women in Boston who eternally talk clothes, men who don't know a sonata from the last popular tune. Indeed, a genuine, born-on-the-spot, incontestable Bostonian assures me his favorite poem is "Casey At the Bat," and I suspect him of being the man who, boldly entering the Diocesan House, inquired for the bar. He never dines at home. Happily, I may add that he never meets the Boston Parisians, nor the pink-coat-

ed sportsmen, nor the quiet people who prefer sociability to society.

Moreover, he is beyond the pale of Bohemia. For even our Bohemia has its pale. It has to have, else sham Bohemians (as classifiable a type as sham swells or sham intellectuals) would enter in and possess the land. Take ten rolls of dark red wall paper, six horse pistols, a photograph of Maxine Elliott, and a few yards of "Bagdad stripes"—and there you have a complete Bohemian of the wrong sort. The right sort of Bohemian, as we view these curious matters, doesn't pose and doesn't dissipate. You climb four flights to find him, in his shabby little attic chamber, and you sniff his cooking dinner before he has opened the door. He paints, let us say, or he writes—and he cancels life's necessities, to obtain its luxuries. A season ticket at the Symphony, grand opera in plenty, the best plays, the choicest books—these, and the comradeship of kindred spirits, he simply has to have. Rome, Florence, Munich, Berlin, Paris—he knows them all. His culture is at once catholic and cosmopolitan, his theory of enjoyment both precise and uncompromising. Knowing just what he wants, he gets just that. His is the Bohemia of Du Maurier, only the Quartier Latin ideal is here purged of all taint or suggestion of evil, till it becomes a fine and very human substitute for the "plain living and high thinking" of Puritan New England.

Naturally, Bohemia gets more or less snapped up by the genial, lion-desiring Bostocks and Hagenbecks of Parisian Boston, which is certainly an admirable state of things for all concerned, since it fills the Bohemian stomach with nutritive viands and the Parisian brain with new and inspiring ideas. But Bohemians never disport themselves at the Hunt Ball, and you as rarely meet them among the "folksy" Old New Englanders as among the highly conventionalized *bourgeoisie*. Not that they are excluded. They simply are not included. And why should they be?

Here, then, are four fairly distinct classes, and no hearts broken—except, perhaps, those of the more ambitious

*bourgeoisie*, who would monopolize the Hunt Ball, if they could get within monopolizing distance of it. Take us all in all, you will find us a contented race, living at peace with one another, and little given to "climbing." And even the stranger—with us, but not of us—can have his fling. For behold, we swarm with strangers. Students of science, of art, of music, of oratory (save the mark!) flock in from the farthest crannies of the realm, and hither their tribes come up—to bear them company, and for "the better prevention of scandals." Tribe hobnobs with tribe. Indeed, many a Western family has borne witness to the effervescent hospitality of Boston, in its failure to note that it never met a Bostonian, but only other Westerners within our gates.

Transplanted villagers do likewise, though now and then you behold the erstwhile Arcadian winning something like genuine acquaintance with Boston itself. He joins, let us say, the Society of Associated Anti-Vivisectionists, or (if he happens to be a woman) the Patriotic Society of Prehistoric Beldames. Boston is, so to say, pretty nearly clubbed to death. And as our clubs—excepting, of course, our purely social and fashionable ones—are fervently devoted to "causes," an ardent devotee, whatever his antecedents, obtains his due measure of recognition. That recognition may extend not an inch beyond the club and its conclaves, but it at least means a cheery speaking acquaintance with "persons of importance."

Congeniality, then—congeniality rather than wealth—marks the lines of cleavage between the groups of social Boston. A thousand dollars a year won't admit you to jolly fellowship with Horse Show people, but that is because a thousand dollars a year won't make you a fellow that Horse Show people can care for, or qualify you to care very genuinely for Horse Show people. Cruet and carafe may be amiably enough disposed toward each other, but oil and water don't mix. Fifty thousand a year without culture won't admit you to Parisian Boston, and yet a thousand a year plus genius has been known to

serve as a very highly effectual open sesame. Among our charming Old New England Bostonians, money is never the standard; likeability is. Cultivated sojourners from West or South are not wittingly or unwittingly excluded—they are simply shut out of our ken by the multiplicity of nearer interests; they may come with princely wealth or with little or none—it matters not; in a city as completely and as definitely organized as ours, their personal existence becomes an affair of supererogation. Arcadians we leave mostly to themselves, not because of their poverty, but because in our heart of hearts we find little in common with them. In all points we earnestly desire to be sincere. Conservatism, with us, means at its best the caution that necessarily foreruns a lasting relationship. We have, perhaps, small talent for forming new ties, but we certainly have still less talent for breaking old ones! Says the impulsive Westerner: "A sudden thought strikes me; let us swear eternal friendship!" He drops you as easily, they tell me. In Boston we abhor this rash and brittle sort of alliance as intensely as our New England ancestors would have abhorred the cynicism of the cold-blooded diplomat who observed: "Treaties are like Japanese handkerchiefs—very pretty when new, but liable to tear." We are by nature tenacious, by instinct prudent. This, of course, has its disadvantages; your funeral may cut short your period of probation. In Cambridge, which is Boston to the *n*th power, the wife of a German professor, having enjoyed twenty years of Cantabrigian cordiality, returned to the Fatherland—whereupon a Cambridge lady of ancient lineage exclaimed: "I'm *so* sorry she went away so soon; I had been intending some time to call upon her."

In Cambridge they say that "mere wealth can never keep one out of good society," and in Boston also (excepting, of course, *bourgeois* Boston) the joke has its point. If you still suspect that money rules our social institutions as it rules those of most American cities, or, at least, as Mr. Harry Thurston Peck affects to think it does, pray observe

what we do (and don't do) with our money. Money we have, in great plenty; Boston is still the richest per capita of our large cities; and Boston loathes and abominates display. Along "Millionaires' Row" simplicity stalks unchecked. At the opera, at the Symphony, at a "private view," a noticeable modesty and restraint in the dress of our women bespeaks our repugnance for vulgar show. The fashionable avenue of New York impresses us as Florodora turned loose. And our houses—"good houses," as Major Pendennis would have called them—front the street with almost Belgravian decorum of exterior. Within may be Meissoniers, Turners and Millets, choice rugs and priceless hangings, the costliest of rare books, and such exquisite things as a monarch might sigh for; but without, no attempt at advertising, no evidence of desire to stimulate envy, no sign of conscious pride in the possession of riches.

Furthermore, the sound morals of our moneyed families point—am I not right?—to something very different from the cashocentric philosophy. Towns there are where money covereth a multitude of sins, where divorce becomes a popular sport and intrigue a pretty pastime, and where all is forgiven the multi-millionaire; mere parvenus defy the code of common decency, till a clever humorist writes: "Me heart beats high, Hennessey, whin I behold thim palatial homes iv luxury and alimony." You might, therefore, expect to find a somewhat similar condition in Boston. For "good houses" in Boston have been good houses for several generations; the old East India Trade, the building of Western railroads, and the capitalization of vast industrial enterprises long ago made them rich; so that, were dollars the basis of social dominance, we might safely venture upon a "very Roycrofty" line of ethical eccentricity. Instead, you find us notoriously, almost blatantly, moral. We have to be, and besides, we prefer to be. It seems to us that Mr. Oliver Herford outlined a rather sensible way of life when he bade us "be good, and all that sort of thing."

Another point, Bostonians with modest incomes rarely live beyond their means. Why should they? You can even take residence in a "mean street" without serious sacrifice of social prestige. Tiny Acorn Street, the Dreyfus of Boston thoroughfares, fell into temporary disgrace, had its verdict overhauled by an informal Court of Cassation, and is now rehabilitated; the South End, decadent these years, still shelters families of unquestionable eminence; Chestnut Street, between Charles Street and the river, is known as Horse-Chestnut Street because it is a perfect congestion of livery stables, and yet people of the choicest quality are to be found there. In Cambridge, a grand mansion on a splendid avenue may mean that you are "not received," whereas a "garden house" (a converted barn behind the dwelling that faces the sidewalk) may mean unbounded popularity. In short, Boston lives above pretense—it may even live above a barber shop and still preserve its dignity. While, of course, an impressive address becomes a pronounced asset and is therefore decidedly desirable, a shabby address can be lived down—or perhaps I should say, lived *up*—if you have once got a hold on our hearts.

Our hearts, then (and they aren't "paved with pebbles" either) determine our social predilections. The lady who is supposed by outsiders to rule Boston society happens to be very rich, she happens to have a taste for "getting up features for the Sunday papers," she happens to own a palace (open to the public at a dollar a pate, at the most inconvenient hours, and generally not open at all); but neither her wealth, nor her passion for notoriety, nor her marvelous collection of art treasures can really explain her prestige. She reigned before she had built her palace and before she got written up in the thirty-five-cent magazines. She reigned because Boston liked her. Money helped, of

course, because money enabled her to do what she pleased, and she pleased to do some highly entertaining things; but the main point was her personal force and charm—the woman behind the fun. We found her congenial.

To sum up the whole matter, we Bostonians hold, as did the shrewd old Roman, that "to like the same things and to dislike the same things—this, indeed, is firm friendship." We have held this conviction so long, and applied it so sincerely, that our social world is divided up, just as the anonymous philosopher said, "into water-tight compartments." Hence a degree of monotony in each compartment. The same group, remaining practically unchanged year after year, is in danger of getting monotonously tired of itself, and this no doubt would actually happen, were it not for our genius for fads. Fresh enthusiasms sweep over Boston with all but cyclonic vehemence. They strike so deep, stir so potently, and get taken so seriously, that they make new people of us every little while. Perhaps it were better to recruit new faces, new voices, new spirits from out the multitude of newcomers, but at this we are poor hands, I confess. And were I to suggest a way to puncture our social reserve, I should say, "Write the greatest poem of the age, or direct the most distinguished of our educational institutions, or paint incomparable pictures, or join hands with us in some stupendous movement for the reconstruction and regeneration of the Solar System." Even our traditional composure can thus be torpedoed. And if, perchance, you don't find yourself ammunitioned for so forcible an onslaught, then—well, Heaven pity you! To succeed by mere force of personal attractiveness presupposes the circumstance that your greatest great-grandfather had the foresight to be born in Boston and to live here for several generations.





## HOW WILL IT BE

HOW will it be, when one of us alone  
Goes on that strange, last journey of the soul?  
That certain search for an uncertain goal,  
That voyage, on which no comradeship is known?  
Will our dear sea sing with the old sweet tone,  
Though one sits stricken where its billows roll?  
Will space be dumb, or from the mystic Pole,  
Will spirit messages be backward blown?

When our united lives are wrenched apart,  
And day no more means fond companionship,  
When fervent night, and lovely languorous dawn  
Are only memories to one sad heart,  
And but in dreams love kisses burn the lip,  
Dear God, how can this same fair world move on?  
ELLA WHEELER WILCOX.



## HIS ONE PROPOSAL

By J. W. Kennard



NORTON saw the distress signal, and rose and strolled lazily over.

"Sorry to interrupt," said he, with his usual drawl; "but, Beales, I am under a solemn obligation to take Miss Clancy off for a long stroll on the beach every afternoon, and the fateful hour has arrived. Beastly nuisance, this dragging a girl off with me when she'd much rather be flirting with a good-looking young fellow like you; but it's Kismet. My aunt's will be done!"

"Let me take your place this afternoon, Norton!" said Beales, eagerly—so eagerly that Nan frowned portentously behind her fan.

Norton shook his head.

"Awfully good of you, I'm sure, but I'm afraid it won't do. You see, my aunt holds me personally responsible for

the safety of this young person, and if anything should happen when you two kids were off together I could never forgive myself. No, I'm sorry, but I rather guess this must be a family party, and that for an hour or so Miss Clancy will have to try to content herself in the company of her aged and decrepit relative. So come along, small child."

"At least, I may go with you?" pleaded the young fellow.

"Oh, by no means," put in Miss Clancy, quickly. "We couldn't think of dragging you off in the hot sun. Besides, there are always family matters to talk over, and Cousin Jack and I utilize these duty strolls for that purpose. There's Miss Davidson over there, looking lonesome and forlorn. Go talk with her for a while."

And with a smile she followed Norton down the steps and out upon the

beach, leaving the young Englishman strangely discomfited.

For a little the two walked in silence. Then Miss Clancy said, in a tone of amusement:

"You do it beautifully, Jack! Keep on, and I shall be persuaded myself before long that my mother is your 'dear aunt,' as you so affectionately call her, and that we are cousins 'really and deedly,' as my small sister says."

"Well, why not, I'd like to know? Wasn't your mother Aunt 'Cindy to the whole village in those good old days? Bless her! What difference does it make whether she has or has not a drop of the Norton blood in her veins? But, I say, what was the row this afternoon? Saw your hailing sign and ran over, but couldn't make out why. Was that English beggar pressing you too hard?"

"Why—why—I suppose it isn't quite nice for me to say it—"

"It's all under the seal of the cousinly confessional, of course. *Absolve te!* Say on."

"Well—I—I was really afraid that he was going to propose."

"And being young and inexperienced in that sort of thing, you were naturally frightened, and looked about for some one to deliver you from your parlous plight. Quite right."

"But—right there—in open daylight—in sight of everybody—"

"That's so, it was awful! He must have been hard hit, or he wouldn't have dared. No accessories—the paling light of the young moon—or the gas turned down in the dimly lighted parlor. Oh! it was crude, raw! I don't wonder you shuddered! Beales must be a duffer at that sort of thing! Why, how did he expect to gather up the spoils of victory with everybody looking on? I believe that contracts of that kind, to change the figure, are not considered binding without some sort of—well, without something passed from lip to lip, as you might say. Now I'm very careful myself about the accessories when I go in for such a thing as that."

"You!" scoffed the girl. "I don't believe that you ever proposed to a woman in all your life!"

"Don't make any mistakes, young one. The certain thing about some certainties is their uncertainty. Why shouldn't I propose to a woman, I'd like to know, Miss Impudence? And haven't I been proposing to you on an average once a day the last year or so?"

"Nonsense! You know you haven't!" she retorted, indignantly. "You're the one man of my acquaintance that I am perfectly sure about and never afraid of. As for the rest—well, just as soon as you grant them a little—they want more, and are never satisfied until they have asked bothersome questions; and then it's all over, and they go away grieved or angry. Jack," she turned to him, impetuously, "Jack, why is it? What is there about me to make the men keep pestering me to marry them? I wish you'd tell me, for I'm about tired and sick of the whole thing!"

The man stopped and held her in a long, level gaze before answering.

"Well," he said at length, judicially and dispassionately, "it is a mystery, of course; a kind of fever in the blood, or a temporary insanity; there's no accounting for such things, really. Still, you mustn't be too hard on the poor devils. It must be confessed that there seem to be some grounds for their madness. There's a trick about the eyes, now—a dash of fun in a wealth of womanly tenderness; and a mouth that seems made for kisses; and a rounded cheek—don't turn it away—that suggests the innocence and purity of a baby; and there's a pretty wit, withal, that speaks of humor, and a thoughtful speech that tells of a keen intellect and a well-stored mind. Oh, I can't put it all in words; I'm no good at that sort of thing; but I can see that the poor chaps may have some real or apparent justification for losing their heads. I can even understand"—his voice had lost its flippant strain now, and was low and quivering with an undernote of suppressed passion—"that a man might be so infatuated and so misguided as to count the world well lost just for the feeling of your head on his breast, and the pressure of your lips to his own."

"Don't, Jack!" protested the girl, with

a little laugh that somehow would not sound light and untroubled. "Don't! you're just as bad as the rest of them. Leave me out of the account—I ought not to have asked you that silly thing. Come back to that other question. I'm consumed with curiosity—Eve's own daughter, you know. 'Honest Injun,' now, did you ever propose to a woman?"

"Think I'd propose to a man?"

"An evasion unworthy of your legal mind! Keep to the point."

"Is this under the seal of the confessional, too?"

"Oh, of course. Names will be required, as the editors say, 'not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith.'"

"Ah, that lets me out, then. If it were a matter pertaining to myself alone I might not mind opening up the cavernous depths of my heart for your amusement or warning; but it would be manifestly unfair to drag in the name of any lady who may have been pestered—to use your own word—by me on the subject of matrimony. She might not like it, you see."

"Never mind the names—I was only joking about that part of it. But I am not joking about the rest. I am in earnest, Jack. Often there is something in your lightest and most flippant remarks that almost brings the tears to my eyes—a sort of undertone of sadness; and I have wished that I knew what it was. Of course, I don't want to force your confidence; but we are old friends, Jack, you know, and if there is anything that you can tell me I'd like so much to hear it. I think that I need not say that the secret will be sacredly kept."

"A keeper of secrets, and a woman!" murmured Norton, under his breath. "All things are possible, perhaps; but are all probable?"

The little nose lifted itself contemptuously.

"Another evasion, and worse than the other. Distinctly, your wit is deteriorating. The next step will bring you to some variation of the mother-in-law joke, as *apropos* to the subject in hand. Come, let's sit down by this rock. Now,

Jack Norton, I ask you again; no equivocation, please; did you, or did you not, ever ask a woman to marry you?"

The man stretched himself at her feet, with his head resting on his hand, and his face turned seaward. For a time silence held them both. Then, in a tone from which all lightness had gone, he said:

"I have a curious notion to answer your question, Annette, and to tell you something that I have never expected to speak about. And I am all the more inclined to do it, because this is our last talk together for a long time—possibly for all time."

"Why, Jack!" faltered the girl, "what—what do you mean?"

"I am going away to-morrow morning. I sail next Tuesday by the *Tauric* for an indefinite stay abroad. No—" as she would have interrupted—"hear me through first. You have brought it upon yourself, and you will understand better when I tell you my story."

"You asked me if I ever proposed to a woman. No, and I never will. Once, years ago, I proposed to a child, and that is and shall be my only matrimonial venture. We were neighbors and playmates, and sweethearts from our earliest days, although I was several years older than she. I can't remember when I didn't love her, and when there was not in my heart the expectation that she would be my wife. When she was fourteen, and I nineteen, I went away to college. Our parting was behind the old hayrick back of her father's barn—the accessories were not very romantic in those days. Of course, our hearts were broken, and all that sort of thing, and neither knew how life was to be supported in the absence of the other. It was then that I made my first and only proposal, putting into words what had been taken for granted for years; and when we went back to the house my little sweetheart had promised to be my wife some day, and proudly wore on her third finger a cheap little ring that I had bought with hard-earned pennies. I was away for a year, for my college was a long distance off, and there was not much money for traveling. When

I came home for my summer vacation I found a change. My love was shy and constrained. She shrank from me when I found her alone, and even the kiss she gave me was cold and lifeless. My poor little ring had disappeared—where, I hadn't the heart to inquire. It was very evident that my dear repented her promise to me, and was uneasy lest I should insist upon it.

"Of course there was but one thing to do. I got work on a farm a dozen miles away, and remained there until the opening of the college term, scarcely returning home at all in that time. During the next year my father died, and my mother moved away, and there was no excuse for my going back in vacation. So we drifted apart, naturally and inevitably. My sweetheart finished her course at the village schools, graduated from college, was taken up by her rich aunt, and became a reigning belle—the object of pursuit of every eligible bachelor in her world."

"It is only within a year that our paths have crossed again. She has forgotten or forgiven the blunders of those far-off days, and is very gracious to me. I have fallen into a quasi-protectoral relation to her. She calls me cousin, and it is understood that I am to stand between her and bores and ineligible. The men about her resent me, but they can't help themselves. Her manner toward me is perfect, and they must follow her lead, under penalty of her sovereign displeasure; but neither to them nor to her am I anything other than an elderly guardian, a male duenna, a more or less trusty watchdog. That which is permitted to them, the right to love her and to declare their love, is denied to me; she has herself told me that I am the only man whom she feels sure to be without matrimonial intention concerning her. I thought at first that I could stand it; that it would be enough for me just to be with her. But I find that I was wrong; I am not strong enough. If I stay here, I shall do something dreadful one of these days—snatch her up in my arms before them all, or kick some of these whippersnappers about her down the steps, or some-

thing else as bad, and bring shame and mortification to her dear heart. So, for her sake, as well as for my own, I'm going to quit the game in which I can never hope to be anything but a spectator.

"There, I think that's all. Your majesty is served. I beg your pardon for inflicting such a stupid and uninteresting tale upon you, and I hope that you will understand that I had no intention of telling it. It was simply your question playing into the whim of the moment that drew it out. Now shall we go back? It's getting late."

Springing to his feet he held out his hand to assist her to rise. But she paid no heed to him. Her face was toward the sea, and her eyes were hidden from him. While he waited she lifted her head, and in her eyes was a look that quickened his heart with mingled doubts and hopes almost sickening in their intensity.

"Perhaps the story is not all told yet," she said, softly, fumbling in the neck of her gown as she spoke. Then drawing out something hidden there, she held it toward him, and asked:

"Do you remember this, Jack?"

It was only a child's gold ring, thin and battered and worn, but at sight of it the man gasped.

"You don't mean——"

"Must I tell the rest of it?" she smiled. "Oh, what a silly boy you were—and are! And I—well, perhaps I wasn't any better. When you came home that dreadful time we couldn't have misunderstood each other worse if we had tried. You left me a child; you found me a woman, with a woman's thoughts and feelings beginning to stir in my mind and heart. Among these was the question whether you still loved me. You had been out in the world and had met other girls, and how did I know but you had found some one more attractive to you than I? It was because of that thought that I took off your ring the very day that you came home; I didn't want to hold you by any sign of your promise. I expected that you would ask about it, but you didn't, and so I made up my mind that you didn't care.

Then you went away, and I was sure you didn't. At first I cried myself almost sick over it; but that passed away, and I have lived until the present time. Heartache is pretty hard to bear, but it doesn't seem to be fatal very often.

"But, Jack"—the sweet face was covered with roses now, and the voice was so low that the man had to bend close to catch the words—"Jack, if—if you care to know, I've—I've worn your ring over my heart all these years, and whenever a man has asked me to marry him it has been the ring that answered him. Sometimes I have almost wanted to say yes; I thought you didn't care, and I have been so lonesome. But as I have tried to say it, the ring against my breast has said, 'You can't; you mustn't; you belong,' and I have had to answer 'No' instead. Oh, Jack! What are you doing? Somebody will see you! Oh, you mustn't! You're tumbling my

hair all up! Stop; I can't breathe! And, besides, where are the 'accessories' about which you are always so careful? Right here, in open daylight! How crude, how raw! Why, I'm ashamed of you!"

"Hang the accessories!" cried the enraptured lover. "When a man has been kept out of his rights for a dozen years he's not going to let little things like circumstances stand in his way."

"How about that proposal?" asked Nan, slyly, as they walked homeward a little later. "Isn't it about time you made it in due form?"

"Not much!" he answered, emphatically. "I told you that I had never proposed to a woman, and that I never would, and I'm not going back on my word. That one proposal to my child-sweetheart stands for all time, and—please God—for all eternity, too," lifting his hat reverently as he spoke.



## THE REASON WHY

NOT that the Great Life needs  
My poor, pale deeds.

Not that the Valiant Throng  
Will heed my song.

Doth mighty ocean dream  
Of woodland stream?

Or to the sun in heaven  
Can light be given?

But 'tis that I, born low,  
Have need to grow.

The soul so much receiving,  
Must needs be giving.

The heart with joy and wonder swelling,  
Its secret must be telling.

MARY WHEELER.

# A SHIP'S SCANDAL

By Owen Oliver



THE DOCTOR (*Leaving Southampton*)—This is a pleasure, Mrs. Golightly. —No, not quite unexpected. I saw your name in the list at the office a few days ago. I've taken to studying them, since you came home with us.—Yes, I say it to everybody. Only this time it's true.

Tell you about the people aboard? I don't know many of them yet. We haven't begun to roll! Which are you curious about?—The tall man in the panama? That's Westley, the novelist, a man with a future.—The pretty woman in the red hat? That's a Mrs. Fernleigh, a woman with a past. I'll tell you some other time if you're very good.—No, not *too* good. I shouldn't think she's more than twenty-eight. The girl in the gray cloak? She's a Miss Vane; no past; future depends on Westley. She mayn't mean to marry him; but her mother means her to. Just watch the old lady.

They're rather a flirtatious cargo, I fancy. Present company excepted, of course. They're not all so discreet as we are. Anyway, we're six months older and wiser now. I'll tell the chief steward to put you on my right.

MRS. NEW (*Second day out*)—Good-morning. I'm much better to-day. Which is the Mrs. Fernleigh that everybody talks about?—Really. You wouldn't notice anything wrong in her appearance.—Oh! Very deceptive. They say she's setting her cap at that clever Mr. Westley already. But no man is a match for a woman of that sort. I shan't let Charlie have anything to do with her.

MR. CHATTERTON (*Leaving Madeira*)—Did you notice Westley taking that Mrs. Fernleigh about on shore? She hasn't lost much time, has she? It's astonishing what a fool a man can be.—Ye-es. They say he's the coming novelist. I suppose that's what attracts the women. I don't see much in him myself. Well, there's that pretty little Miss Vane. She's always making eyes at him. My dear fellow, she hasn't a ghost of a chance against the Fernleigh woman.—No, I don't know what it is; but everyone says there's something against her. They say her husband's dead. Anyhow, I don't suppose it makes much odds to her.—Yes, she looks quiet enough, as you say.

MISS AULD (*Sixth day out*)—Mrs. Fernleigh a friend of mine! Good gracious, no!—I shouldn't have spoken in that way, because I don't really know anything against her; and she is very pleasant.—Well, she isn't exactly fit for Caesar's wife.—Of course, Westley is 'Caesar.'—Between ourselves, my dear, the reason I talked to Mrs. Fernleigh this morning was to keep her away from him, and give little Miss Vane a chance.—Anyhow, he'd better marry her than the other woman. I nursed him when he was a baby, my dear, and I'm fond of him.

There is something nice about Mrs. Fernleigh, too. I can't think it could have been her fault, whatever it was she did.—No, I haven't found out what it was. Still, it would never do for him to marry her.

I'm sure that was either a whale or a porpoise. I wish we could see one of the officers to ask.

MISS VANE (*Taking her hair down*,



*eighth night out*)—What are you so cross about, mother?—How should I know.—Very well. I do know. I had four dances with Captain Spurway, and supper, and sat with him on deck till the lights went out. I shall do it again if I like.—Oh, I'm sick of hearing about Mr. Westley. He may be a rising man, but he doesn't rise at me. On the contrary, I'm grateful to Mrs. Fernleigh for stopping you from making me marry him.—Of course, you meant it for my good.—I know we're horribly poor, and we've always been poor; and you don't want me to have a hard life as you've had. Poor old mother. Weren't you ever in love, mother?—I don't know if Captain Spurway is rich or poor; but I'm going to say "Yes."—Oh! I do!

MAJOR GENERAL BOMPAS, C. B. (*Tenth night out*)—Look here, Westley, I want a word with you. I—I was at school with your father, you know, and—er—you're making a fool of yourself with that woman; a confounded fool, sir!—Old enough to take care of yourself? Pshaw! A man can be a blank idiot at thirty, let me tell you.—Yes, sir, and at sixty, too, confound your impertinence, if a woman like your Mrs. Fernleigh gets hold of him.—Don't swear at me, sir. I won't stand it. By —, I won't! She made up her mind to catch you from the time you came aboard, I tell you.—If you can't keep your temper, it's no use my talking to you. If you knew what was said about her in Simla.—Yes, sir, I will mind my own business in future. You—you young ass!

There's no doing anything with the boy, Mary. I spoke to him like a father, but he lost his temper like a—What did I say? Oh—er—nothing.

COLONEL RULE, V. C. (*Eleventh day out*)—Yes. I know the story about Mrs. Fernleigh. She was the wife of a man in the Indian Civil, who went under. He's dead now. He wasn't altogether a bad fellow, poor beggar. I suspect others were equally to blame; but he got found out. I know people connect her with it, but I am not aware that they have any reason for doing so. Was there ever a good-looking woman

in India that hadn't things said about her?—Well, to my mind, she's more sinned against than sinning. Anyhow, she's had a hard time since, and I know several things to her credit.—Certainly I shall not cut her. Well, if Westley marries her I shall visit them. I confess I hope he won't!

MR. VYSE (*In the smoking room, twelfth morning out*)—Selling sweeps be hanged! They're a regular swindle. Lost four pounds this week. If you must have a gamble, I'll bet a level sov. on Mrs. Fernleigh versus Westley that they're engaged within a week of landing.—Done!

I've been watching them ever since we started. She's played her cards uncommonly well. He may be smart, but the smartest chap that ever lived couldn't hold out against a woman of her class, unless he recognized the class. Westley doesn't; and she'll have him as sure as fate!

THE PURSER (*Meeting the doctor as he comes back on deck, from carrying below Mrs. Golightly's rug, book, fan, etc., thirteenth evening out*)—Well, doc, how goes it?—Attending her professionally, are you? For heart trouble, I suppose?—Wants the doctor always at hand, eh?—Come, come! You needn't scandalize me. It's the purser's duty to attend to the ladies.—She is rather a nice little thing. What are you looking for? Cigarette? Here you are.

We're going to have a big crop of engagements this voyage, old man. They may as well get engaged at sea as anywhere else.—Yes, and the Spurway-Vane affair. Clever little girl that! Went for his money, and managed to fall in love with him, too. Good double event!

The fellow I'm sorry for is Westley. He's a real good chap; and he had a career before him. Now he'll be done for, socially. Upon my word, doc, I don't believe there's any real harm in the Fernleigh—Just so. You and I see enough women to know. A very charming woman; and I should say she's rather better than most. But he's a fool if he marries her!

MRS. GOLIGHTLY (*From a deck chair,*

*very close to another deck chair, beyond the starboard wind-screen, fourteenth night out)*—Ssh! You mustn't, doctor, really. Suppose anyone saw—I didn't say I didn't *want* to, but only one, then—I said *one*. Here comes somebody. Talk about something. *(With raised voice)* A lovely moon, isn't it. Do you notice the peculiar shape of that cloud? *(Whispering)* Westley and "the woman"! I was afraid they were going to sit here. Isn't it *shocking*, the way she's been leading him on. She'll make him marry her. You see if she doesn't.—I don't believe she *could* fall in love.—You ought not to ask.—Need not, then.—There's Mrs. Taylor; I wonder if she saw. But a dark sleeve shows so against a white dress.

THE CAPTAIN *(After his third religious service, on the last Sunday)*—I never listen to ship's scandal, sir. Mrs. Fernleigh is a passenger of the company, and therefore entitled to respect from its officers—Umph!—Umph! Smoking room gossip, smoking room gossip. Started by some of those men who play cards instead of coming to my services, no doubt. So far as I have observed, Mrs. Fernleigh is a most estimable lady. She sings very nicely, and it is a pleasure to accompany her on the flute. She also takes a great interest in my classes for the children. I make it a rule to disbelieve scandal.

What! Westley going to marry *her*? Dear, dear, dear! I wouldn't have had it happen on board my ship for worlds! I knew his father! Of course, I don't say there is anything wrong in her, but—

THE WOMAN *(Holding out her hand to keep him away. The last night of the voyage. Lights out; starshine, and moonshine, and foam hissing by)*—Don't say it, don't say it!—Yes, yes! I know what you were going to say. It is impossible; impossible! No, because

I do love you. I think you know. That was what he did. Yes, you have heard it correctly. You have left out what was said about *me*. Of course you knew it was a lie! Could anyone know me, talk to me, be friends with me, and not know it was a lie!—Yes, yes, dear boy, I know. You have proved it by asking me to be your wife; and I am going to prove it by refusing. Frank, if you have any love for me, any pity, do not ask me again. If you ask me a thousand times I must say "no"; and every time it hurts—oh! you don't know how it hurts.—I know it hurts you, Frank; but it would hurt worse if you married me.—Ah! You may think you would not mind the gossip; but you would.—Indeed, Frank, I am not setting my judgment against yours. It is what anyone who loved you would advise you. Ask your mother, then, when you get to Cape Town.—No, I can't promise to abide by her decision. She would be influenced by your wishes.—Very well. If your mother and Colonel Rule both tell me to marry you, I will; but my dear—oh, my dear!—they never will! Good-by!

THE MAN *(A month later)*—Looking thoughtful? Am I? When a man's been married a week he begins to realize his awful responsibilities. Sweet-heart!—Well, I *was* thinking, if you must know. About the imaginary virtues that you credit me with!—I possess them unconsciously then.—What are they?

Told a lie? No-o. I don't believe I ever have, since I've been a man. Do you know, I came very near telling one a month ago. I *should* have told it, Lucy, if my mother and the colonel had decided differently.—Certainly I would have told you that they advised me to marry you, if they hadn't told you so themselves.—Because you are the best woman in the world!



# BOB BAXTER, OF FAIRWATER

By Chauncey C. Hotchkiss

Author of "The Case of Private Rafferty," "The Passing of Lon Twitchell," Etc.



It was high noon and hot with the heat of an Arizona summer—witheringly, tragically hot. Lieut. West stood under the *ramada* of the Yuma depot waiting for the northward-bound train, in which he and his men were to return to their post at Los Angeles. With a squad the officer had been sent down to Yuma to demolish the work of a squatter, who, through ignorance or carelessness, had allowed the outbuildings of this poor ranch to overlap the line of the Indian reservation by the matter of a few feet.

The work had been completed, and Lieut. West was congratulating himself that in fifteen minutes he and his men would be on their way back to a salubrious climate, when he experienced a practical illustration of the adage pertaining to the cup and the lip. As he rolled what he considered would be his last cigarette in that locality he was hailed by the telegraph operator, and there was placed in his hands the longest official dispatch he had ever received. He glanced over its contents with a scowling face, then dashed his cigarette to the ground, swore violently and read it again. It ran thus:

"LIEUT. R. W. WEST, U. S. A., Yuma, Arizona:

"You will at once arrange to engage six Yuma Indians, ration them for twelve days, and obtain transportation by railroad to a point as near Agua Caliente as possible. They will be dropped there, and make search in the desert for a Miss Florence——"

The last name was blurred. West stepped up to the operator.

"What word is that?" he asked.

"Something like Rollins, if I remember right, lieutenant. It came to me like that. Shall I demand a repeat?"

West thought a moment.

"No," he said. "I reckon there are not more than twenty or thirty young women crazy enough to jump into the desert. The name does not signify."

The dispatch went on:

"—who left the hospital at Los Angeles five days ago and boarded a train for the East. Imperfectly recovered from a long illness. Probably wandered to nearest water, which is boiling spring northward from point of accident. Probably delirious. Last seen near Sanders. Missed soon after. Forward your men to post on completion of detailed duty. You are to remain in Yuma to receive report of above expedition.

"By order Col. Comdg.

"SMITH, Q. M. A."

The officer re-read this stunning order several times before he could get his bewildered brain to realize that he was doomed to remain in the inferno of Yuma for two weeks longer, then having exhausted his stock of expletives, he submitted to the inevitable, turned over his tickets to his corporal and waited to see his men under way.

The incoming train finally rumbled over the muddy Colorado three hours late, having been delayed by a sand-storm two hundred miles east. There was a rush of passengers to the waiting room, for Yuma, being the southeastern outpost of Pacific coast civilization, was the first station that held the luxury of ice and water without stint. Among the travelers was a man of nearly fifty, who forced his way ahead of his fellows without regard to the rights of others, and, seizing a two-quart pitcher of ice water, raised it to his lips and drank

to repletion. He was evidently half crazed by heat and thirst, the drinking water on the train having given out hours before, and the consequent shock of the cold, internal deluge was more than he was able to bear. As he set down the pitcher his red face turned pale; he gasped, then shrieked and sank to the floor. By the time a doctor arrived on the spot he was dead.

When the trains pull in at Yuma in summer after the long, heated, and often maddening, trip across the desert, it is not unusual for some desperate passenger to over-indulge in the article of ice water and sicken in consequence, but death is an unlooked-for result, and such thoughtlessness is confined to the young and the ignorant.

"I don't see how such a d—n fool lived to be fifty years old," said the physician, turning to West, who had been at the man's elbow.

"I warned him as I saw him drink," said the officer.

"What did he say?"

"Told me to go to hell."

"Well—he's taken his own advice," responded the physician; "but I presume I can give a certificate. It is a plain case. Who is he?"

"Don't know. Never saw him before. From the East, I judge by his rig," answered the officer, as he looked down at the repellent face of the dead man, whose black eyes were wide open and whose sparse, inky beard scarcely hid his thin lips and hard jaw. Then the young man turned away. He had lost interest in the case, and other matters demanded his attention.

But the identification of the stranger was satisfactory if not complete. The authorities determined that he was from New England without a doubt. A number of letters directed to Mr. William Robbins, New Haven, Conn., were in his pocket, together with two drafts of one thousand dollars each, from a New Haven bank on one in San Francisco, and four hundred dollars in cash. In his grip a number of articles bore the monogram of W. R. The victim of his own indiscretion had evidently been a man of means; his watch, his diamond

studs and the quality of his clothing spoke of both wealth and refinement. He was a nine hours' wonder. Interest in him lasted until the public read of the incident in the papers and then he was forgotten.

The expedition set on foot by the military authorities and intrusted to Lieut. West, had been carried into effect. The Indians were engaged, and as the matter was one of life and death, hurry dominated every movement of the young officer who had charge of it. An empty freight car for the accommodation of the Yumas was attached to the eastbound train, and toward sunset West saw the band start on its way.

Ten days later the westbound freight picked them up and brought them back. They were hungry with the hunger of wolves, having probably eaten their twelve days' rations in two. They were thirsty, shrunk, morose and exhausted, and they had been unsuccessful. Lieut. West jumped at the conclusion that the unreliable wards of the nation had squatted down in some convenient *arroyo* out of sight from the railroad and passed the time in eating and sleeping, but he soon had reason to modify that opinion.

Four Eyes, so called because he imitated his white brethren by wearing spectacles, though with the glasses punched out—having found the bows somewhere—was the head of the party, and he became fairly impressive as he indicated the barrenness of the land. They had gone, he said, after his fashion of few words and many signs, as far as the boiling waters.

"Woman no there!"

He spread his arms, lifting them up and down to represent the wings of a bird.

"No buzzard!"

He ran his fingers over the table top.

"No coyote; no wolf. Heap plenty snake—heap plenty sun; heap want water—no water!"

It was broadly graphic. The officer knew enough to be aware that no buzzard in the sky meant no corpse within miles, the same bearing on the absence of the coyote. He knew, too, that the

water of the boiling spring must have been intensely alkaline if an Indian would not cool enough of it to slake his thirst, and he was himself aware of the killing power of the sun.

It was plain to him that the girl had perished. He wondered, after the fashion of a young man, if the lost woman was pretty or plain, young or old, but his conjectures were momentarily checked when the Indian put his hand into an obscure part of his clothing and drew forth a lady's shirt-waist. It was of a light, prettily figured Chinese silk, and had been torn in several places. Four Eyes made a motion and each Indian pulled out a treasure-trove. When they had unburdened themselves West commended them for their honesty, and painted a mental picture. He was moved. Before him lay the silk waist, also a blue silk ribbon—probably for the neck—a linen collar soiled with car grime, one kid gaiter shoe, quite small, one black stocking and a tattered hat.

"My God!" said the officer. "The child was delirious from heat and undressed to get relief. Where did you find these?"

Four Eyes extended an arm to the level of the horizon, then slowly swung it upward until he pointed at the zenith.

"Sun there."

"Half a day's walk from the railroad?" asked West.

Four Eyes nodded comprehensively.

"No see gal. Heap sand. Trail heap soon gone—gal gone."

"Where—do you think?"

The man looked vacant and shrugged his lean shoulders. The lieutenant paid him off and waved the band away; then he made his report in writing, conforming it to the facts obtained and supplementing it with the opinion that the lady in question had fallen from the train, but had not been seriously hurt by the accident; that she had wandered northward, as surmised, and had undoubtedly perished. Her remains had been stripped by the buzzards and the skeleton buried in the shifting sands. It was but one more of the countless victims to the yawning maw of the Great American Waste.

After that he took the train to Los Angeles.

Mr. Robert Baxter sat on the porch of the adobe station of Fairwater with his eyes fixed contemplatively on the wavering mirage that seemed to lift and fall on the drifting heat that rose from the red and burning soil.

The mirage of the desert is not a convincing spectacle except to the heat-maddened traveler. It is too elusive, but it is very beautiful. Some days Baxter saw it as a bank of snow—the reflections from the alkali beds far to the north—sometimes as a lake, exasperating in its suggestions of liquid coolness. Often it was stationary for hours, and as often it would shift like the changing pictures of a panorama. Mr. Baxter knew it would all vanish when the sun fell toward the horizon.

Fairwater was only a tank station. The railroad company had thought it necessary to drive a well in that part of the desert in order to supply its locomotives, and as the water obtained was not so disgustingly saline nor so bitterly alkaline as at points east and west, the station's name became a monument to the character of the fluid that filled the sand-scored tank, and dribbled down its sides when Baxter forgot to shut off the pump.

The station was little more than the tank and an adobe house in which was installed a telegraph relay. Something that was called a store was set a few rods beyond the railway property, and a few low, thatched and filthy huts of Mexican "greasers" were scattered about it, but the latter were rarely occupied save in winter. The environment was not prepossessing. It was at a point where the barren, overheated, ochre-colored purgatory of the chaparral prairie is about to merge into the positive hell of the burning sands of the Arizona desert.

When Robert Baxter had gone out three years before, a green hand in the employ of the company, he had shivered over the horrible waste that stretched away in every direction farther than the eye could reach, and he was awed by the solitude and overpowering silence. Since then he had felt the mesmeric in-

fluence of the great, mysterious barren which seemed at times to beckon him to its heart. The *lomas* that skirted the wide horizon were exquisite in their changing hues. Siren-like, they sang to him. He had known the glamour of the distance, which was often veiled in soft purples, sometimes in the richest crimson, but usually washed with a wealth of melting yellows as though a dust of gold had been sifted over the silent earth. The sun played strange tricks with the land.

The man had learned to love the glowing richness of color, but having had a taste of desert fascination, he had grown to fear it, too. His first assistant had wandered away into the great tomb, lured by morbidness or crazed by heat, and had never been heard of. His second assistant had been killed by a rattlesnake which had coiled itself around the warm throttle handle of the pumping engine, and now Baxter was waiting for a third assistant to be sent to him. For the railroad company realizes the fact that it is not good for a man to live alone in the desert. He is liable to become horror-stricken and wander away into the gold and amber-colored distances and become exhausted and die before he can return.

And it was insufferably lonely, for the society of Fairwater was not select. Paquita, a Mexican girl and the over-the-left wife of Fritz, the trader, was the only being about the place for whom Baxter had the slightest respect, and in this was mingled a large proportion of pity. Sometimes two or three cattle punchers would seem to spring from the desert, having drifted over it from some distant ranch, and proceed to make night hideous at the store. Perhaps a company of United States troops, with leatherized faces and sunburned hair, would ride up, inquire about signs of Mexican insurgents, and ride off again after well-nigh depleting the tank in behalf of themselves and their water-famished horses.

Cactus was everywhere. Sage-bush and grease-wood sprang from the dry, punky soil, looked at the burning world and stopped growing, but did not

wither. They put on armor to meet the conditions. Life was a struggle, but Mr. Baxter stuck to his manifest duty and lived on hope. It was the only cheerful commodity in sight. He had been promised a station within the realms of civilization if he would hold out for a little longer. He touched the outside world through his telegraph key, smoked his pipe, ran the pump and pored over the papers that were kindly thrown from the trains. That was his life.

He had been reading one of these papers, but it had slipped from his lax fingers and fluttered to the floor of the porch. He stooped for it and ran his eye over the remaining unread columns. Among other items was that of the sudden death of Mr. William Robbins in the Yuma depot, but the incident was but mildly interesting to Baxter. When he finished the paper he looked up. The mirage had vanished. The great desert was softening in the declining sun, but the beauty, which was growing toward its climax, did not appeal to him as usual. Something different had caught his attention. Something black was moving in the distance.

It was too small to be a wandering steer and too large for a prowling coyote. It disappeared behind a clump of mesquite, then reappeared and stopped. Baxter rubbed his eyes. When he had cleared them the object lay on the ground in an open space of tawny sand. He stepped into the house and took down a pair of fieldglasses from the high shelf along which were arranged his store of books, focused by binoculars on the distant object and then uttered an exclamation. In another moment, with a long but unhurried stride, he was covering the burning ground between the station and the store. Behind the latter the trader's miserable pinto pony was staked out and browsing on the scanty, sun-dried bunchgrass. Paquita sat on the step of the doorway braiding her long, blue-black hair.

"Where's the general, Niobe?" Baxter asked the girl.

"Fritz—you mean?" she returned.



"Yes."

"Him's all asleep." The girl's voice was soft and sweet as she spoke and pulled her ragged skirt over her dark, bare knees.

"Can I see him?"

"Him kill Paquita if um wake."

"Drunk—is he?"

"Yaas. What you want?"

"There's a man out yonder. He's down—fallen—sabe? I want pony and go save—sabe?"

The girl sprang to her feet, and, shading her black eyes with her small hand, looked in the direction of Baxter's outstretched arm. And even as she looked two black specks floated up from the horizon and drifted across the deepening blue. The buzzards were already gathering.

"Ah! Um see—um see! How long fall?"

"Just fall," returned Baxter. "I take pony—yes?"

"Yaas—soft. Bring back quick. Fritz not know."

The agent did not wait for more. He was aware of the danger of taking a horse without permission in that part of the world, but having it there was no further ceremony. He drew the iron pin from the sand, coiled the lariat that held the sun-bleached shack of bones, and, leaping on the bare and scraggy back, grated his boot heels against the outstanding ribs of the equine derelict and made off across the track. It was like riding a picket fence.

The half-breed watched him grow smaller and smaller, one hand still to her brow, the other pressed to her bosom; a bronze figure of exquisite proportions, clothed in rags, outlined against the sad background of the desert.

Baxter had seen the man lying a mile away, though the clear air made it seem half that distance. He had not gone so far into the wilderness for three years. It was like being alone at sea. The immensity and the terrible silence depressed him. Who the man was; young or old, cowboy, ranger, soldier or bad man, he had no idea. He was simply

following his instinct—that to save human life.

The unfortunate lay on his side and Baxter's first thought was that he was dead. He presented a pitiful sight; his face blistered and swollen, his eyes half open, his dry and discolored tongue protruding from between discolored and sand-cracked lips. The stout leggins had protected his lower limbs, but the trousers above the knees were frayed by cactus needles, and the puffed hands were bleeding from the same cause. The newness and style of the clothing spoke loudly of the "tenderfoot," but the hair was worn waving to the shoulders after the fashion of the cattle puncher.

Baxter slid from his horse and whistled softly as he bent over the recumbent figure; then his whistle took on a note of wonder. The unfortunate was alive, and for that he could thank his youth, for despite blisters and sun-scorch, the agent saw his find was young; in fact, hardly more than a boy. There was nothing to be done but pack him to the station, for to Baxter it was a plain case of heat, thirst and fatigue.

He lifted the lax figure and was about to place it on the patient pony, when he caught sight of a small bundle but a short distance away. It had been wrapped in brown paper, but the covering had been so ripped by cactus thorns that its contents, some dark cloth, was partly exposed. Securing this, the man shifted the youth in such a fashion as threw most of his weight on the pony, and, holding him, he made his way back to the station.

He worked quickly now, knowing the value of time. He laid the stricken youth in the bunk of his own room instead of in the less airy one prepared for his expected assistant. He fed the sufferer with little sips of water from a spoon and exerted himself with a fan until the perspiration poured from him. Not for a moment did he stop working, though he wished, the while, for the only person who could help him, and, finally, as though in answer to a prayer, Paquita appeared in the white square of the doorway and came across the floor as silently as a shadow, her rags

fluttering in the hot draught. There was no need of words to explain the situation to her. The woman looked down at the unconscious figure hovering between life and death, then she gave one quick glance at the agent.

"Not for you," she said. "Paquita take."

"Why?"

"No mind. Take pinto back. Fritz ugly drunk. I fix heem."

She pointed at the patient and took the fan. Baxter, glad of the relief, was about to go from the house, when he marked the rescued bundle lying on the floor. Catching it up before the girl could notice it he wrapped it carefully in the newspaper he had been reading, and stowed it away in the adjoining room. When he had repicketed the pony he went around to the door of the store, giving a wide berth to the pile of evil-smelling hides drying in the sun. It would not do to ignore the trader in a matter of such moment as finding a stranger. The proprietor was just emerging from the building, a freshly lighted pipe in his shapeless mouth, his bloodshot eyes blinking in the strong light. He was in an unlovely humor—but that was normal.

"Hello, general," said the agent, in familiar greeting.

The trader planted his gross body on an empty box, and glared at the speaker.

"Vat you do mit der pony yet, hey? Who tole you abowd takin' der pinto, hey?"

"You were asleep, general. Paquita told me."

"D—n Paquita! Vat you want mit him?"

Baxter answered cheerfully.

"Nothing to get hot over, general. I just picked up a sure-enough tenderfoot out in the chaparral. Keeled over by the sun. I fetched him in."

The trader opened his little, red eyes.

"Yah! How much you find?"

"Nary red. He's alive."

"Ach, du lieber!" The German's interest seemed to lag after this expression of disgust. Baxter turned and walked toward the station, but was less than halfway to his destination when he be-

came aware that the Falstaffian figure of the trader was lumbering after him. He hurried his pace and entered the room.

"Quick, Niobe! Fritz coming!"

The girl started up in sudden fright, then whipped herself through the front door and around the building, running home like a deer as she saw the huge form disappear into the station. Baxter put on a well-feigned air of astonishment as the but half-sobered man darkened the door. The trader glanced suspiciously about the room.

"Vare vos dot Paquita?" he asked.

Baxter laughed.

"Search me, Fritz. I'm not her keeper."

The fellow grunted, and lurched up to the bunk. "*Himmel!* It vos only a poy!" he ejaculated, as he scowled at the swollen features. "He vas as goot as dead vonce already. Vat you find?"

"Nothing, I told you."

"Noddings! Let's see."

He made a motion toward the front of the loosened shirt, but Baxter jumped to his feet, and grasping the fellow by his fat shoulders, whirled him away.

"None o' that, general! There's to be no halving in this! If there's anything there it's mine—all mine! I found him!"

The eyes of the old man snapped in pure ugliness. He puffed violently.

"You haf my hoss, ain't it?"

"Yes, I did; but I'll see you and your horse to thunder before you touch the boy. Now get out of here! *Rouse mit sie!* I've got enough work to do!"

It was said good-naturedly, but with force. Had this outrage to the storekeeper's dignity been offered by an ordinary individual it would have been at once resented, and with little risk, for the law, in the desert, was lax. But the accredited agent of a powerful corporation was a person of consequence, and not to be dealt with offhand. The German scowled at the six feet of manhood that stood between him and his intended victim, then with an oath he left the house. Ten minutes later Baxter heard a shriek from the store, and saw Paquita run from the building with her hands to her bleeding mouth. His broad chest

rose and fell in indignation, but he was powerless to interfere.

All that night he worked over his patient as he had not worked at anything for three years, and with no company save the occasional ticking of the telegraph sounder as some through message went over the line. Outside a coyote barked, and once a long freight rumbled by without stopping. When the sun leaped from the horizon, for in that latitude it comes suddenly, he knew he had saved a life. The swollen tongue had gone back, the lips were closed, the tense muscles had relaxed, and the patient was asleep and perspiring.

Baxter drew his hands across his tired eyes and staggered to the telegraph key, sent his greeting along the line east and west, and was about to call up the superintendent at Tucson, and report his find, when something within him held his hand.

"Better wait until I can tell something more," he muttered, and started in to prepare his simple breakfast.

All that day the rescued flotsam of the desert slept without a break. Twice the half-breed looked in through the door, and fled after hearing the report of continued improvement. Towards night the eyes of the youth opened, and in them the agent saw the expression of intelligence. He pulled his chair to the side of the bunk.

"Well, younker; you have had a close call, but you are beter. Can you talk a bit?"

"Where am I?" came the feeble inquiry.

"Several hundred miles from where you belong, I reckon. What's your name?"

"White. Robert White." The words were scarcely audible.

"Bob White, eh? Where I came from that's a quail. Now look here, younker, I'm not sitting here to listen to jokes. What I want is your real name—the name you had before you landed in Texas."

The body shifted uneasily, and the eyes wandered as though to avoid the searching gaze of the agent.

"It is all I can give you."

"Where are you from?"

"San Francisco."

"What were you doing out in the sand without a horse, or a gun, or anything?"

The weakness of the patient showed in the trembling lip.

"I—I cannot tell you. Please let me sleep. Where am I?"

"At Fairwater, a tank on the line."

"Thank God for that!" murmured the youth, and turned his face to the wall.

Baxter had consideration. He left the room abruptly. He was perfectly aware that he could not be harboring a desperado, but the misguiding chance which had sent this unarmed stripling into the desert was very perplexing. Again he felt inclined to call up the superintendent, but he restrained himself.

He spread his legs apart, and thrust his fingers into his belt as he looked over the arid reaches of the burning land, and thought on the problem. Fritz had come out of the store, and was saddling the pony, while Paquita sat in the shade of the building watching the operation. Presently the lumbering German went back to the house, brought out his Winchester, hung it to the pommel of the saddle, and lurched himself across the animal. Then he rode off to the south.

As he topped the swell of the third divide and became a mere moving speck against the sky, the girl jumped to her feet, and as though borne through the hot air on the wings of her rags, sped to the station.

"Fritz—he gone one—two—three days. Me nurse."

"All right, Niobe," said the agent; "but go and wash the blood from your mouth. Did the brute strike you?"

The girl felt of her bruised lips.

"Yaas. He hit once sometimes too much. Paquita do some bad things."

"What do you mean?"

The half-breed's black eyes flashed. She felt in the ragged bosom of her dress, and drew out a new skinning knife.

"Me steal," she said.

"Better think twice before you use

that, Niobe," returned the agent. "Why don't you run away from him?"

"Where Paquita run? You take Paquita?"

Baxter changed the subject. He was not in a position to give practical advice, and to protest in her behalf would be as useless as it would prove dangerous. The agent considered that he had trouble enough of his own.

On the third day Fritz came back, but fortunately for the half-breed she was not at the station at the time of his arrival. The German strode down to the railroad and greeted the agent.

"Vare vos der young feller you found?"

"Inside."

"Troed him owdt."

"He's still sick, and is asleep. Let him alone."

"Vos Paquita hanging abowd here—abowd der young feller? *Yah?*"

"No."

After this virtuous lie Baxter felt relieved, but the small, blue eyes of Fritz glinted at him from their corners. Finally the storekeeper went home, and two days later took the train going east. He had made a good thing in a bunch of hides, he said. He was going to Leon Springs, and would be back shortly.

When he had gone things fell into their normal course, but to Baxter the days were no longer stagnant. A week passed, and Fritz had not returned. The patient was up and about, tottering weakly to a chair set in the doorway to catch the draught. It was near the telegraphing desk, and whenever the instrument began its spasmodic ticking he would give it all his attention. Paquita sat at his feet like a dog, fanning him when he nodded sleepily, and following him around with the tenacity of his shadow. If devotion went for anything, it was apparent that the half-breed was in love.

Mr. White was of delicate physique, and there was nothing in common between his dress and his speech. He was quiet, unobtrusive, and as bashful as a child. The blisters were gone; he looked brown and healthy, though he

was yet frail and listless, but never a word had he dropped as to his past or his future, and for reasons of his own, Baxter had never pressed him. The youth had written a letter as soon as he could hold a pen, and when the agent had handed it to a conductor to mail in San Antonio he noticed it was addressed to a woman in New York. He noticed, too, that the handwriting was not that of an illiterate.

After that the boy seemed content to sit and look out at the changing mirage, to admire the shifting colors of the distance, listen to the clicking of the telegraph sounder, and read the papers thrown from the trains. Baxter, stoking the little pump engine, shoveling sand from the track, or engaged in other matters, was distinctively conscious of the silent companionship that had sprung up between him and the youngster. He did not obtrude himself on his guest, partly from the fear that if he did, that if he continued to press him for his history, his guest might wish to go away.

And he did not wish him to go away. The mere presence of the stranger had grown to be attractive. He was always ready to talk in his slow, gentle voice, if the subject was not himself or his past doing. The agent felt the bond that drew him to the youth—the bond that often draws the strong to the physically weak, but he did not attempt to analyze it. It had not taken him long to arrive at the conclusion that Mr. Robert White was not of desert breed; for those people and things born of the desert have all their points and their ugliness on the outside. The agent's liking for the young fellow was felt rather than expressed, and the two had some things in common, one being a sense of humor. When the station master had brought Paquita in as a nurse, he had said:

"Here's Niobe, younker. She'll take care of you better than I."

"Niobe?" said White. "What a classical name for a Mexican!"

"Oh, well; her name's Paquita, but I call her Niobe because she's all tears."

The play on pronunciation had pleased White, who laughed feebly for

the first time, and as the big fellow saw the ready comprehension of the boy his heart warmed to him. It is flattering for a stranger to appreciate your pet joke.

From being rough and ready Baxter had gradually become tactful. He finally discovered that his guest was without a cent, and he was as pleased as he was puzzled thereby, for it takes money to travel. Of course he could get permission to pass his young friend over the road for a reasonable distance, but he did not ask for such permission. He was well content to wait for the story which would come in time too soon; he dreaded the loneliness which would ensue when his guest left him.

As the days sped, and the trader did not appear, Paquita rose from a dull apathy to something like brightness, though she fled from the station when distant smoke heralded the approach of a train; she knew what it meant to be caught away from home by her jealous master. One evening four cowboys came over the desert, and finding the store deserted, proceeded to make free with store property. That night Baxter barred both his doors, and listened to the drunken howlings of the quartet. Paquita lay on the floor of the station. At midnight the roisterers came down in a body, and asked for the girl, but Baxter poked his revolver through the small window, and ordered them from the railroad property. They went, howling like wild cats and shooting in the air, but their surprise at their reception or their respect for the corporation prevented any further demonstration. The boy lay trembling in his bunk, and the half-breed, pale with fear, clutched the handle of the stolen skinning knife.

Three days later one of the sobered quartet met Fritz at Leon Springs, and with the honor of a thief, or perhaps because he was afraid of the trader, he paid for his share of the liquor and tobacco they had used. He also incidentally told him that his wife had spent the night in the station building.

Fritz grunted, and scowled, and showed his honest informant a new horse he had won from a tenderfoot.

He was sober and good-humored, but that night he was drunk, and early the next morning he started west on horseback.

Baxter was feeling ill at ease, but for the life of him, he could not have told why. The dead level of absolute monotony rested on everything; no disturbing element was within his ken. No answer from the boy's letter had come from the East, nor had his guest become restless. The youth was sitting in the shade of the *ramada*, reading the newspaper left by the morning train, with the faithful Paquita close at his feet, her chin resting on her clasped hands, her black eyes following the movements of the agent, who, Winchester in hand, was shooting at a rattlesnake which was making its way across the track a dozen rods up the line. The half-breed had been touched by the finger of change. Her hair was closely braided and shone like polished jet; her face and hands were clean; she wore a clean calico skirt which had not been mended more than twenty times, and she no longer cringed when spoken to.

Baxter did not notice the youth suddenly stiffen and turn pale as he fixed his close attention on the journal he was reading. He did not see the quick motion with which the boy tore out the paragraph that had interested him, and hid it in his pocket. White let the paper slip to the floor, and lifting himself from his chair, tottered into his room. Paquita noticed the paleness and faintness, however, and was at his side in an instant, but if the girl thought anything of it as the youth threw himself into his bunk, to her it was but the effect of the intense heat—and her idol was still very weak.

Baxter did not notice anything; his attention was on his mark. He had sighted and fired his last shot at the squirming and wounded reptile, when he became conscious that some one was very near him, and looking up, saw the trader, with a black expression on his flabby face and fire in his eye, standing over him. No one had seen him come, nor did the agent know that the German had been watching the group for some

minutes. A single glance showed Baxter the condition of the man before him.

"Hello, general! Right side up as usual." And he held out a conciliatory hand. Something was wrong.

"I vos rightht side up, you bet. Vare vos dot gal of mine, hey? I vos no general; I vos Fritz. Vare vos Paquita, hey?" The question was a snarl.

"Give it up, Fritz. I don't know."

The red face of the fellow seemed to turn purple with anger. He looked at Baxter for a moment, then his wrath blazed out.

"You tam liar. She vos in dare mit der poy. By G—d!"

With that he swung his huge body around, and ran into the house. Before Baxter could interfere, he had gone to the inner door, and flung it open. The stranger lay in his bunk, with the neck of his shirt thrown wide. In the center of the room stood Paquita holding a fan. Her little teeth came together with a snap, and her hand went to the bosom of her dress as she met the bloodshot eyes of the drunkard. With a roar the brute leaped at her before she could move. Grasping her by the hair, he flung her against the wall, from which she bounded half stunned, and fell to the floor, then he started for the helpless youth on the bed, but now Baxter was upon him. Claspings the German about his huge waist the agent threw him aside, and swung himself between the infuriated man and his intended victim.

"What the devil do you mean, you fool!" he shouted.

"I kill der sneak!" foamed the trader, drawing his revolver from the pouch pendant at his hip. "*Himmel!* he make a monkey of me! I fix him! It vos none of your peeznees. I hear things—I know things."

"Get out of here."

"I finish der jop first, by tam!"

He raised the revolver and made a rush to flank the station agent or bear him down. In an instant the men were in close embrace, the right hand of the maniac was forced up, an explosion shook the room, but the shot went out through the roof. A second later and the firearm spun through the open door.

A woman shrieked. The next moment the two, breathing hard, stood apart, looking hatred into each other's eyes.

"*Hein!* You dinks you can stop me!" panted the German, closing his great fists and crouching for another rush. "I kills you, too! You make me a fool vonce long enough!"

It was an uneven chance, for Baxter. He realized his helplessness against such a mountain of gross flesh, for he was unarmed, and his revolver was in the outside room. He threw up his hands in despair.

"Stop! stop, Fritz!" he shouted. "For God's sake, stop! You are blind! *The boy is no boy; it's a woman you would murder!* Paquita knows. Ask her!"

"A *voomans!*"

"Ay, a woman! By Heaven, you've frightened her to death!"

The coarse fists unclosed, and the German leaned forward, peering at the now unconscious figure on the bed. A moment of close scrutiny convinced him, but his anger was hardly lessened, though it changed its course. He hesitated a moment, opening and closing his loose mouth as though he would say something, then with an oath he turned to where the half-breed was trying to rise from the floor. With a cuff that half stunned the girl he seized her by the arm and jerked her to her feet, then dragging her behind him, stooped for his revolver and left the house. The wrath he had nursed with liquor on his two days' ride through the chaparral was not to be appeased by explanation or enlightenment. With a grip of iron he held the half-breed as they went toward the store, swearing in broad German, and shaking her as they walked. And thus the two disappeared into the building.

An hour later the stranger, now conscious, lay propped in her bunk, and Baxter was sitting by her side.

"And you knew I was not a man?" she was saying.

"From the first moment. No man about here would be apt to carry a woman's dress in a bundle. Yes, I knew you were a woman. That is why I let Paquita nurse you."



"You have been very generous—very considerate." Her eyes filled.

"Then do I not deserve your confidence? I assure you it would be best. You may still count on my generosity."

She made no answer, but shifted her hand to her pocket, and drew out the fragment she had torn from the paper. He took it from her, walked to the door, and read:

"Miss Florence Moody, who fell from a train into the desert, has undoubtedly perished. The search party sent after her has discovered and brought back some articles of her apparel, but her remains have either been devoured or are hidden in the sands. Nothing is known of her save that she was from San Francisco, and no inquiries have been made by friends."

The agent looked startled.

"And you are Miss Florence Moody?"

"Yes; but that is not my true name, and I did not fall; I jumped. I can tell you but little, my friend. I wished to hide myself from a—a person. I had tried other means and failed. I was discovered wherever I went. I thought I had provided for everything, and it looked to be so easy. When the train slowed I leaped. I was not hurt. I changed my clothes for these I have on, and cut my hair, thinking to walk to the next station, and, passing for a man, take another train. But I did not know of the distance, the heat, the thirst, the awful solitude. I had made no provision against these. I had a light satchel with money, but I must have lost it. You did not find it?"

"No, only a bundle in which was some clothing. It is in a newspaper in the outer room."

"I must have misjudged the time for jumping," she continued. "I had been sick from worry, and I think I went delirious very soon. I thought I saw a lake, and probably wandered far from the track. I remember seeing a snake, and then I ran. I knew no more until I woke up here. It was horrible—horrible!"

Her recollections moved her, and she buried her face in her hands and sobbed softly. Baxter let the paroxysm pass; he was himself affected, and a great

wave of pity, moved by something stronger, swept over him.

"And you wished to be lost?" he asked, very gently. "From whom? Why?"

"I cannot tell you—yet," she returned, looking at him frankly. "I have written for money—written to a friend. When I leave you perhaps I will tell. It is your due. You have been more than merely good to me. You will bear with me a little longer, and will keep my secret? Else all I have gone through will have been in vain."

She held out her hand to him, and in spite of himself Baxter raised it to his lips. Just then the call for Fairwater sounded from the desk, and he ran out of the room, frightened at his own temerity. The message that came over the wire would have been ecstatically good news to the man at any other time. It was a notice of his long-delayed promotion, and an order to hold himself in readiness to move at any day, but he said nothing of it to his guest as he went about his usual duties. He preferred to wait for the time which he knew must soon come.

Nothing was seen or heard of either Fritz or Paquita as the days went by. Baxter did not wonder at this, under the circumstances. He noticed that the pony had disappeared, but the new horse was staked out in its place. Perhaps the trader had gone off somewhere, and Paquita was too frightened to visit the station. He could not guess that the girl and the pinto were going southward, blown by the wind of chance, and he did not know until long after that the trader lay in his bunk with a new skinning knife in his heart. For days not a living thing broke the wide horizon, nor a movement, save the passing of the trains.

But at last came the looked-for letter addressed to Mr. Robert White. Baxter's heart sank as he placed the thick envelope in the hands of the girl. She did not appear elated as she opened it, and fingered the crisp bills it contained. When she had finished reading, she looked up at the man who stood watching her like one waiting for his sentence.

They were on the *ramada*, and a cloud of smoke in the distance was all that was left of the train.

"I go to-morrow," she said, in a low voice. "I have known contentment here. I shall never forget you. I shall never——"

Baxter took a step towards her.

"I cannot let you go," he said, hoarsely, and with his heart in his honest eyes. "I mean—not until I do. I am promoted. Will—you—will you go with me?"

The girl was not startled, although she caught her breath sharply.

"I know what you mean," she returned, quietly and without affectation. "I—I wish it could be otherwise—but I cannot go with you."

"Why?"

"Because—because I have a husband. It is he from whom I wished to escape. I knew he was coming for me. He is a brute. I ran away from meeting him. Now you know my story."

Baxter was too astonished to speak.

"Yes," she went on, "I have been married a year, and lived with him but a month. I left him in New York, and went to San Francisco, and from there to Los Angeles. I would die in reality sooner than live with him again. He traced me, and was coming for me. When I received his telegram I acted."

"But, Florence——"

"Nay, do not plead!" she interrupted, quickly. "Spare me a shred of self-respect! Can you not see that I *must* go—for your sake as well—as well as for my own? Oh, I have feared this! Why will you make it so hard?"

The last was almost a sob.

The light broke on the man slowly, but when her full meaning flashed over him he was hopeless. She had shown him heaven, and closed the door before he could enter. He had no argument to meet this situation, and before he could find words for any answer, the girl had gone into the house.

The sun was setting, and the glorious hues were caught on every point that could reflect a color. But it was all blackness to Baxter. He staggered to

the track and walked away between the rails as though he would get from himself; when he came to his senses it was quite dark, and the station was out of sight. Then he remembered that the signals were not set, and turning, hastened back. As he approached the building he saw the twinkling of a light in the assistant's room, and made out the figure of the girl as she stood on the edge of the *ramada* peering up and down the track, for the wondrous stars over the desert made the night luminous. Before he reached her her voice came to him clearly, but without an echo from the wide plain.

"Robert!" It was the only time she had ever spoken his first name, but there was something in the call that made the agent's heart jump; he started and ran. She met him halfway, and he saw that she was no longer dressed as a man. She was trembling with suppressed excitement, and in her hand was something white.

"Oh! you frightened me so!" she whispered, hurriedly, as she took his arm and dragged him into the house. "The last half hour has been a year!"

"I did not mean to frighten you," he said. "I was trying to be brave."

"Do not try!" she exclaimed, her blue eyes shining like stars. "Read! read! It was around my dress!"

She pushed a newspaper in front of him, pointing at a paragraph with her trembling hand, then she snatched up the light, and held it close that he might see the print. It was a short notice.

"Mr. William Robbins, of New Haven, Conn., died suddenly in the Yuma depot on the 8th inst. Overindulgence in ice water was the immediate cause of his death. Inquiry shows him to have been a man of considerable wealth, who had come to California to meet his wife in Los Angeles. No trace of the lady can be found. Only his bankers in the East are known, and they have been notified."

The paper fell to the floor, and the two looked at each other. Baxter uttered a "Thank God!" and held out his arms, while with something between a laugh and a sob the girl fell into them.

# THE PERSECUTED HERO

By W. D. Nesbit

THERE, close the book. The tale is done;  
It is a fearsome tale, indeed—  
A tale one would he'd not begun,  
But once begun he needs must read,  
Must hurry on from page to page  
With cruelty to rouse his fears—  
With this first act to rouse his rage:  
"She poured her stories in his ears!"

Poor hero! He was brave and strong,  
And made of nerve, you may be sure,  
Or else her course of hurtful wrong  
He had not managed to endure.  
We read how he, upon the street,  
Was given not the slightest chance  
For life. The girl he thought so sweet—  
"She froze him with a haughty glance!"

An iceberg, in her wake he floats  
Page after page, all coldly dumb,  
While she with keenest pleasure gloats  
To see him, helpless, hopeless, come.  
Until at last this luckless wight,  
The siren managed once to meet.  
What then? Why, then this awful blight:  
"She scorched him with her scornful speech!"

Poor hero! This was woeful work!  
A shameful way to treat the man—  
To hurl him, with a heartless jerk,  
From icebox to the roasting pan.  
What followed? Let us find the place—  
The corner's turned, the page to mark.  
First frozen, then the heat—now trace:  
"He melted softly in the dark!"

So, close the book. The tale is told.  
They called it "happy," "up to date,"  
But it must make the blood run cold  
To read of this man and his fate.  
Poor hero! It was ever thus!  
Man's destiny is stern and grim.  
Hold! Here are further shocks for us.  
The ending is: "She married him!"

# THE BROWN CLOTH SKIRT

By Hewitt Hanson Howland

## I.



HE sound of a low but satisfied chuckle came suddenly from the depths of the pillows. A young woman, in the blue and white striped uniform of her profession, straightened in her chair, and loosed the white fingers that had been idly clasped in her lap.

"Is there anything I can do for you?"

The convalescent rolled his eyes toward her, where she sat at the side of his bed.

"I saw her," was his irrelevant reply.

The last rays of a late October sun flashed their farewell glances through the western window. The nurse rose and drew the shade.

"Why do you do that, Miss Nelson? I'm strong enough to stand a little sunlight in my face, and I didn't see her out of the window."

The nurse colored slightly, and readjusted the blind. Again the young man chuckled as his words recalled the cause of his merriment.

"I didn't see her face, though."

"Haden't I better take your temperature? This sounds to me like fever," replied Miss Nelson, as she picked up the thermometer from the dresser, and took her place beside the bed again.

"Well, I thought you'd get in the game pretty soon. Haven't you any but professional curiosity? Don't you want to know what 'her' I saw?"

During the six weeks in which typhoid fever had restricted George Howard Colton's society to the physician and the nurse, he had come to know these aids to the injured on something better

than a per diem basis. He had found Miss Nelson all that a trained nurse should be, while trained nursing was necessary, and now that he was out of the dark woods of danger he saw, in the clearer light of recovery, that she was even more than her profession demanded. And so a light and airy friendship sprang up between them; a rococo acquaintance, Colton called it, dropping into his loved architectural jargon.

Miss Nelson critically examined the little thermometer as if she had never seen one before.

"Oh, yes," she replied, "I should like to know what 'her' you saw, but——"

"There you go!" Colton interrupted, petulantly. "Want me to take some aconite, or digitalis, or some——"

Fearing that what was coming might be stronger than either the aconite or the digitalis, Miss Nelson exclaimed:

"Wait a minute, wait a minute! I believe you're hungry, and don't know what's the matter with you. Let me get your supper, and then you can tell me about 'her' while you eat."

He grunted his assent, kicked one of his slippers off the bed, disentangled his long legs from the folds of his dressing gown, and declared his intention of sitting up.

The sun had dropped behind the building across the way, and the twilight shadows had so taken possession of the sick room that Miss Nelson's brown hair might have been black, and her blue eyes green, for all Colton could see, though his gaze followed her as she lit the soft-shaded lamp and placed it on the stand at the head of the bed.

"Please, what are you going to give me to eat to-night?" he asked, as he

scraped his foot around on the floor in search of the missing slipper.

His nurse smoothed the coverlet on which he had been lying, and laughed a queer, little laugh that never failed to challenge Colton's attention. It always sounded as if she were indulging herself in some forbidden pleasure, and although it was not much more than an overgrown smile, yet he felt, vaguely, that an interesting but innocent past lay concealed behind it.

"I don't see anything very funny in that question," he complained, in the spoiled-boy tone of the active man unused to illness.

The nurse looked up at him, her eyes smiling.

"Well, I don't see it," he repeated. "I confess my people wore high, peaked hats and marched single file to church through the snow; and it may be that I can't tell a joke from a gargoyle, but—"

"Oh, it is not the funny things only that make us laugh; do you think it is? But about the supper, what do you want?"

"Soft-shelled crabs; a ruddy duck; asparagus salad, and a bottle of—"

"I guess your Puritan ancestors left you enough humor to keep you out of serious trouble," Miss Nelson interrupted. "Soft toast and a little rare beef are what you really want, though you may not know it."

Colton closed his eyes in sign of weak submission, and, as his nurse gave a parting touch to the tea table she had been arranging, he said:

"Well, soft toast if you like; fate cannot harm me. I've seen 'her' to-day."

Miss Jane Nelson smiled on him indulgently, and closed the door softly behind her.

## II.

"Wait a moment, Wilkins."

The man paused, about to leave the room, an empty tray in his hands. He had disposed the milk toast and rare beef temptingly before his master, under the directing hand of the nurse. Turning to her, Colton said, with authority:

"Will you please order your evening meal, Miss Nelson—and, Wilkins, spread a place at the other side of this table."

Jane looked at the bold-spoken invalid. He was replacing the glass cover over the toast to keep it warm. Wilkins waited. So did the nurse. She was not thinking of what she should order, however. Colton spread his napkin over his knees.

"A little cold chicken and a pot of tea, please, Wilkins, and anything else there is that will go with them." Miss Jane Nelson knew the inevitable when she met it.

"And, Wilkins," called the rapidly recovering host, "bring a bottle of sauterne."

"You can't drink that wine, Mr. Colton!" The necessity for professional interference coming to her rescue.

"I can look at the label, can't I?—and two green glasses, Wilkins."

The man knew, as he left the room, that there was no longer need for doctors or nurses in that household.

"This is to be a feast, a celebration, and I am going to eat as a civilized being should eat, with somebody at the opposite side of the table, and you are going to be that somebody, and—if you don't mind, I am glad of it."

Miss Nelson sat where the light from the lamp fell across her face. She opened the evening paper that she had brought in with her. Colton watched her eagerly.

"In celebration of having seen 'her,' I suppose." She quietly turned the pages of the paper.

"Oh, yes, of course, I had quite forgotten; and I'm to tell you all about 'her.' Isn't it jolly?"

Miss Nelson laid the paper aside, and turned toward him.

"Yes, it's fine," and she looked him straight in the eyes and laughed. She had given herself over to the full enjoyment of the situation.

"Why didn't you put on another dress this evening?" Colton asked.

"I didn't know I was going out to dinner."

"I've never seen you in anything but

that blue and white uniform," he complained.

"Isn't it becoming?" she asked, and then regretted.

"The reply is too obvious. I decline to be both convalescent and commonplace at once."

"You're diplomatic if nothing more," she said, in spite of herself. She wondered why she was saying the very things she did not want to say.

"Would you like me to tell you what I really think?" and this time he looked her straight in the eyes.

"As your nurse, I forbid you to 'really think.' It would be too much of a tax." She smiled, glad that he had given her the chance to get the talk back on an easier, give-and-take basis.

"I should like to see you in a soft, black——"

The door opened.

"Thank you, Wilkins, that will do very nicely. You had better bring Mr. Colton some hot milk," she took the seat opposite him.

"Never mind, Wilkins. I'll ring if there is anything more," Colton interjected.

"Now, let's hear all about 'her.' My, but that tea is strong!" said Miss Nelson.

"You seem to have grown strangely interested in 'her,' after your marked indifference earlier in the evening." Colton broke his toast in the milk.

"Oh, you knew I was simply dying of curiosity all the time."

Colton raised his head, and looked at her sharply, questioningly. There was a new tone in her voice, an unusual inflection. The speech was articulate coquetry. The young architect was entirely familiar with the game as played wherever young men and maidens meet under normal conditions. But Miss Nelson had been to him Miss Nelson, the trained nurse. He had never thought of her as knowing the rules that govern, or the tricks that grace the social prize ring. He laughed boyishly and hitched his chair a little nearer the table.

"Well, that's the way to begin, isn't it? You know I've been dreaming, al-

most every afternoon for the past week, of two women, a young one and an older one. I've told you the dream—and it has always been the same—once or twice, haven't I?"

"Yes, I remember," Miss Nelson replied. "You were always conscious, if one can be conscious and dream at the same time, of the presence of these two women; yet they did nothing, and when you awoke you could never describe them."

"I fooled them to-day, at least one of them. I woke up so suddenly that I caught a glimpse of the younger one just as she was leaving the room."

"Oh, what delicious fooling," laughed Jane.

"Nothing of the kind. I saw her, I tell you, and can describe her. I'd know her again anywhere I met her, even if her face was hidden from me."

"Go on, don't stop to scold me. What did she look like? This is better than Peter Ibbetsen," Miss Nelson exclaimed, in a breath.

Colton wrinkled his brow—"don't stop to scold me." He knew his nurse had not learned that at her medical college. He laughed, and asked if he might smoke a cigarette.

"As I said," he continued, "I awoke suddenly, and there, in a half-open doorway, straight ahead of me, she stood. Her back was toward me, she turned slightly and stooped to gather the skirts of her gown. A graceful woman is particularly graceful in this attitude. She was adorable."

"What was the gown like?"

"Ah, woman, woman; science cannot stale, nor medicine wither, her infinite curiosity! That question sounds more like Riverside Drive than Bellevue Hospital."

Miss Nelson picked up the bottle of wine, and put it down on the other side of the table.

"But I can satisfy you this time; I can describe this dress if I never can another one. It was cloth, brown cloth."

"What kind of cloth?"

"Oh, I don't know, just goods; cloth, cloth—something that isn't silk. It had four or five brown velvet bands around



the bottom, and a velvet belt of the same color, with long, peaked tails hanging down the back. It was a stunner! Can't you see it? I can."

"Yes—I believe I can." Miss Nelson drew her eyelids together, as if to fix the impression.

"I'd better ring for Wilkins to take away these things." She walked over to the bell.

"Let's drink one little toast to the brown cloth skirt," he pleaded.

"No"—firmly—"I can't run any risk. I must leave you for the doctor to-morrow, in the best possible condition."

"Where are you going to-morrow?"

"Dr. Latimer told me, yesterday, that you would not need me after to-day; the week ends to-day, you know," she said, quietly.

"Does it, indeed. Well, you tell Latimer to go get himself edited. Your professional services may not be necessary, but it does not follow that I do not need you."

She laughed a little anxiously.

"Oh, no you don't need me; you just think you do. That's part of the disease."

"Then you throw those tonics out the window; the disease is good enough for me."

"I am awfully sorry, if you really want me to stay a week longer, but——"

"Who said anything about a week? If you've made an engagement you can simply send word you can't come."

"But you really are well enough, Mr. Colton. Wilkins can do for you all I do." She was firm.

"Oh, hang Wilkins. Don't you want to stay? Aren't you comfortable? Isn't the pay—I beg your pardon, I didn't mean that." She had colored and turned facing him. He realized again that she was more than her profession demanded.

"You must not leave me in this way, I can't——"

"I'm sorry to have distressed you, I hope you will rest well; possibly you'll see 'her' again."

Jane had reached the doorway, and stood, the knob in her hand, the door half open.

Colton rose.

"I know I have been complaining, and petulant, and a lot of things disagreeable, but to-night—I—I never quite knew till——"

"Oh, no; you've not been disagreeable," she filled in one of his dashes. "You've been—you've been, perfectly charming."

"Jane! Jane!" he cried. But the door had closed, and she was gone.

### III.

One hundred and seventy-eight Putnam Place, was the address Jane gave the driver, when early the next morning she stepped into the hansom cab Wilkins had called for her.

She adjured this model man, as the liberal coin fell into his ready palm, that he was to know only of her departure; that her seventh week ended that morning; that she went early of necessity, presumably to her lodgings, and that she left a cheerful good-by for Mr. Colton, to be given him with his breakfast.

When Wilkins had solemnly bowed her into the cab, and the driver had cracked his long lash, from somewhere over her head, Jane sank into a corner, and languidly drew on her black gloves. A night of sleeplessness and self-examination had left its mark of weariness. In her long vigil, during which she had tried to justify her unceremonious departure, all her musings had been keyed to the beseeching cry of "Jane! Jane!"

The words rang in her ears now, as her suit case wobbled back and forth outside the hansom doors. She knew that in leaving she had acted wisely, yet when reason made its demand she was forced back on intuition for justification. She glanced at her watch, that hung from a little fob at her belt. Colton was probably asking for her at that moment. Poor Wilkins! Jane reproached herself for the hundredth time. What might not Dr. Latimer say? Possibly Colton had worried himself into a fever; he would undoubtedly refuse to take his medicine from Wilkins. The nurse straightened herself at the thought, then she laughed. It was ab-

surd. Her flight could mean only a temporary inconvenience to the patient. His outbreak of the night before was due to the weakness of convalescence. He was lonely and alone, without family or kinsfolk; when strength returned he would forget that he had called after her those words that were still throbbing in her ears. And yet, it was shabby to run away as she had done; it was rude, it was impolite, it was cowardly.

Quickly she resolved to return to the Chester Arms, and say to Mr. George Howard Colton: "You have been very kind. I could not go without thanking you. Good-by." And he would pull himself up in his reclining chair, hold out his long, white hand, and reply: "Oh, never mind all that, I'm sorry you've decided to go. Good-by." Then she would feel better, and then that haunting ghost of a cry would be forever stilled.

But her dreams and her resolves were shattered as the cab wheel grated against the curb, and a voice, from above, exclaimed through the little trap-door: "This is it, ma'am." Jane hurried up the brownstone steps, impelled by the strength of her recent determination.

"Why, Miss Nelson, has anything happened?" exclaimed the maid, when she saw the suit case, and noted the eager attitude of its owner.

During her two years in New York, Jane had spent many weeks with Mrs. Sanderson, Mrs. "Willie" Sanderson, as she was known and called everywhere, and the domestics looked on her as one of the family.

"Oh, no, indeed; nothing has happened," and Jane laughed as she realized her appearance, and the early hour of her visit.

"Come back in the library, please. I'll tell Mrs. Sanderson you're here. She is a little late getting down this morning," said the maid, as she relieved Jane of her burden, and drew the curtain that hung before the library entrance.

"Please don't disturb her if she's sleeping. I'll be very comfortable here." But the maid did not reply, for the

cheery tones of a welcoming voice came from above.

"Jane Nelson, is that you? How in the world did you get here so soon?—bless your dear heart; I'm glad to see you or to hear you; but I sent my note only a moment ago, did you meet the man? Sit down; I'll be with you in a moment, am just putting on the finishing touches." Mrs. "Willie" Sanderson still had that easy and hearty Western manner of speech that her admirers described as "breezy," and her rivals as "fresh."

Jane realized the futility of attempting reply to this volley.

"Don't hurry," she said. "I'll read the morning paper, and see what the society reporter says you've been doing."

When Martin Luther Nelson died at Greenbrier, Illinois, his friends said that he left the largest family and the smallest estate ever recorded in the vital and financial statistics of Davis County. A time had been when his children and his chattels were on a numerical equality, for it had been the old gentleman's custom to add another eighty acres to his holdings whenever the Lord added another branch to the fruitful Nelson stem. The new farm was in every instance given the name of the new baby. The last eighty was christened Jane.

From that day the family fortunes rose and fell, falling a little farther with every wave, until, finally, a long line of mourning friends and neighbors followed a penniless old gentleman to his last resting place. A year later, Jane fled from loneliness and the repeated proposal of every unmarried Greenbrier voter. New York welcomed her, and hospitably made her one of its countless atoms. From the first, Mrs. Sanderson's had been her haven of refuge. Here she had spent all her vacations, and here she had always come for comfort or advice.

As Helen Milford, of Greenbrier, Mrs. "Willie" Sanderson had loved and petted, and, from her three superior years, had patronized little Jane Nelson. But now, as a New York matron, she gracefully forgot the slender difference in their ages, and, ceasing to patronize,

she continued to love and to watch over her exiled playmate.

Memories crowded before Jane's sleepless eyes, as she sat in the Sanderson library, and made a blur of the printed page she tried to read. Suddenly her vision cleared, Greenbrier was forgot: "Mr. George Howard Colton, who has been ill for weeks at his apartments in the Chester Arms, is reported entirely out of danger, though still under the care of a trained nurse." Jane dropped the paper in her lap and gazed, without seeing.

"Is it as bad as all that?" Jane started at the unexpected sound of her friend's voice. "You must not believe all you read in the society column. What have I been doing now?"

"You've been strangely neglected this morning. I can't find a word about you."

From the vantage ground of a perfect morning toilet, Mrs. Sanderson looked Jane over critically.

"A little shopworn this morning, my dear. Is there any trouble? Come have breakfast. I'm famished."

Jane rose, the paper still in her hand. "I believe I'm hungry, too; though I had not thought about it."

"Well, this is the time to think. But did you get my note? I wrote you last night to come and spend two or three weeks with me while Willie is West. I left word for the note to be sent you the first thing this morning."

"It must have been mental telepathy, for I decided last night to come and offer myself as a candidate for guestship."

"Do take a grape fruit; it will brace you up. But don't you think you would get on better if you let go that yellow journal for a moment."

Jane dropped the paper as though it had suddenly burned her fingers. Mrs. Sanderson laughed, but eyed her guest suspiciously.

"Jane Nelson, there is something back of all this. What have you been doing?"

"Back of all what?" Jane asked.

"Oh, this weary, abstracted air. This early morning visit. I'm tickled to death to have you here, of course, and

glad you came without waiting for the note, but your look——"

"Without waiting for the note? I wasn't there to wait," Jane thoughtlessly interrupted.

"What do you mean—where were you last night—where did you come here from?"

Jane laughed at the earnestness of her chaperon, who never was content to ask one question at a time. Turning, she picked up the paper where it had fallen, and, indicating a certain item, handed it across the table. Mrs. Sanderson read the few lines, then her eye glanced up and down the column.

"Did you say I had been neglected? It's strange, but the note just above the one you gave me to read announces our return to town, after a month's absence. Just a week late, but it's there."

Jane colored. She had seen only one name in all that long list.

"But no matter about that; I forgive you," ran on the impulsive Mrs. "Willie." "Still, I don't see how George Colton has anything to do with your not being at home. He is a nice fellow, and I'm glad he's getting well; though he is a fool about women."

"A fool about women?" Jane struggled with her lamb chop as she repeated the words questioningly.

"Yes, a perfect fool," Mrs. Sanderson replied, with disgusted emphasis. "He pretends such ridiculous cynicism, and there isn't a girl in town that hasn't been nice to him. But about you, my dear. Why ask me to read of Colton's convalescence?"

"I was the trained nurse, that's all," Jane meekly answered.

And Mrs. "Willie" Sanderson dropped the newspaper.

#### IV.

During the next two weeks, Miss Jane Nelson discovered a number of things. Among them was the fact that her very dear friend, Mrs. Sanderson, was most delightfully ingratiating and sympathetic. She could charm one's secret and sacred confidences from their hiding places, and if, when they timidly came

forth, they were not, according to her judgment, sufficiently robust she supplied whatever she thought lacking. Under her seductive influence Jane told the story of her six weeks at Colton's; describing the gentle friendship that had bloomed in the sick room, and confessing, little by little, how it had blossomed into something more than friendship, on that last evening before her flight.

The two women sat facing the open fire. A paper knife and an uncut magazine lay in Mrs. Sanderson's lap. Jane, with bowed head, stitched industriously. Only twice since her arrival had she left the house; once to select the material, and once to enjoy the discomfort of being fitted. Mrs. Sanderson detected a symptom in her guest's reluctance to go abroad. As Jane drew the thread over her forefinger, and held the needle's eye to the light, she said:

"This time next week I'll be at home, my M. D. sign will swing in the Greenbrier breezes; while I wait within for the courageous patient."

"It's a shame—it's an outrage, for you to bury yourself in that muddy, little Illinois town. The idea of your being a woman doctor." Mrs. "Willie's" indignation was explosive.

"I can't be any other kind, unfortunately."

"Unfortunately you won't be reasonable. If you think you must, why don't you practice in New York—or stay here with us—or get married?" again the questions three.

Jane laughed, as she thought of the desperation of the third, the impossibility of the second, and the impracticability of the first; but she answered none of them. Two of the three inquiries had been before them for discussion many times. Mrs. Sanderson cut the leaves of the magazine.

"Jane?" There was an unnecessary pause.

"Yes," inquiringly.

"We are thinking of making some changes in the arrangement of the house. I despise this thing of the servants not being able to go to the front door without passing through the library. Willie says I know what I want,

and to go ahead, but I insist on seeing an architect. Do you happen to know a good one?"

Mrs. Sanderson wore her well-known air of polite inquiry.

"Don't be utterly absurd," Jane laughed, consciously. "You and your devices are so transparent, that I can see you didn't even hope to be taken seriously."

Mrs. "Willie" smiled the smile of superior wisdom. Jane recognized it, and the possible trouble that lurked behind.

"Nellie Sanderson, what are you thinking of doing?" Jane fastened her needle, and rolled up her work, as if preparing for battle.

"I've already done it."

"Done what?"

"Made an appointment for George Colton to call to-morrow afternoon." Mrs. Sanderson spoke with matter-of-fact directness.

"I won't see him!" Jane flared.

"Why should you? You are not vitally interested in the rearrangement of the house, I presume, since you insist on going back to Greenbrier." Mrs. Sanderson turned the magazine pages provokingly.

"I can stay in my room, or be out of the house entirely; but how can I trust you?"

"Oh, you can trust me," and the older woman gave just the proper emphasis.

For a moment they looked at each other, then they both laughed.

"Come now, Jane, we've beaten about the bush for two weeks; tell me, as man to man, don't you know he wants to see you, and aren't you, at least, willing to see him?"

There was silence for a moment, then Jane rose.

"I think I'll go to bed, if you don't mind." But she kissed her hostess as she passed.

V.

"There's the bell now!" exclaimed Mrs. Sanderson.

"I'll run down the back stairs, and meet Annie at the library door. Did you tell her what to do?" Jane asked, excitedly.

"Did I tell her? We've had three dress rehearsals, and she's letter perfect."

A tall young man, dressed as a tall young man should be dressed in the early afternoon of a late fall day, confronted the much-coached Annie when she opened the street door.

"Is Mrs. Sanderson in?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Will you please walk in? Thank you," the maid added, as he dropped a card in the proffered tray. "Have a seat in the library, please," and Annie drew aside the curtain.

Mr. George Howard Colton stepped across the threshold. As the draperies fell behind him he paused abruptly. Straight before him, in a half-open doorway, stood a young woman; her back was toward him as she turned slightly, and stooped to gather the skirts of her gown. Colton put a gloved hand quickly to his temple. Instantly the fear seized him that the figure might vanish as before.

"Hold there!" he rudely exclaimed, as the door seemed about to close, for the second time, on his dream-lady. "I beg your pardon," he added.

The figure turned, stepped into the room, and closed the door behind her.

There was the brown cloth skirt, with the five brown velvet bands around the bottom, and the velvet belt of the same color, with long, peaked tails hanging down the back. Colton walked hurriedly forward. A wild look came into his eyes, his hands trembled, but he found his voice as a smile came to the girl's lips.

"Why—why, Miss Nelson, is that you?" he asked, awkwardly.

"I'm afraid it is," was the rather shamefaced reply. "Won't you sit down?"

"No, I think I'll lock that door, if you don't mind."

An unformed "why" rose to Jane's lips, but she realized what was the obvious answer to the question, in time to save herself. She laughed nervously, as she asked:

"Are you quite well again?"

"Oh, yes, indeed; thanks to your good nursing, and—your brown cloth skirt."

"But it wasn't me you saw, really it wasn't. Don't you remember, you said yourself, that you never saw me in anything but that blue and white uniform?" Jane rushed on in thoughtless recklessness. Suddenly she gasped, and her cheeks burned until the tears came to her eyes. Surely, after that speech, he must see it all, and despise her.

But Colton was not long from the fever, and this unexpected meeting dazed him. He did see the color flash to her temples, however, and he did know that tears were shining before him in two beautiful eyes. Under the fire of his puzzled gaze, she bowed her head.

"Jane?"

There was a stealthy sound of rustling silk at the head of the stairs; but it was not heard in the library.

"Jane, I said a moment ago that I was quite well, but I'm not," the girl stole a shy glance at him, "and never can be," Colton went on, in his deliberate way, "without you. I need the tonic of your constant presence— Oh, I love you, I love you," he exclaimed, with unnecessary vehemence, for his arms were about her, her face buried in his breast.

"This looks to me very much like fever," she said, when she found breath, and regained the use of her lips.

"It may have been fever once, but it's the real thing now," Colton replied. "But why did you run away? All this time I've been worrying about you, and cursing Wilkins, and searching for you."

"All this time!" repeated Jane. "It's only two weeks and one day. And what woman wouldn't run away?"

"It *was* you I saw in the doorway before," Colton said, as he stood admiring her.

"No," Jane replied, "that was a really-truly dream woman."

"But I don't understand—why didn't you tell me? You must have had this brown cloth skirt all the time."

Jane smiled, and the color came up to her cheeks. Colton took her hands in his.

"I just got it home from the dress-maker's yesterday."

And Colton understood.

# The Day of Doalty O'Doherty

By Seumas MacManus

Author of "Counselor MacCarty's First Scalp," "A Lad of the O'Friels," Etc.



MIND the time it happened, and mind it, well, too. I'm not likely to forget it, by reason that I myself was one of the congregation that day, and—though I say it, who maybe shouldn't—was likewise held to have cut the cleanest copy, and shown the cleanest pair of heels, of any one of the three hundred and some odd men who joined in the steeplechase that day.

I'm now come to the time when I may easily boast that I've a long look back behind me, for many's the whin-bush has withered since I first cried "Cuckoo!"—and so, as you may well suppose, I've known an' seen many a wonderful happenin' in my time, an' many a comical and many a quare one.

But of them all, I can say with an aisy conscience that the quarest, and the wonderfulest, and—I can now say—the comicalet, too, was the Day of Doalty O'Doherty—as we have called it from that time to this.

In the seven Baronies I do suppose there wasn't a deeper-dyed vagabone than Doalty; an' if ye walked Ireland from end to wynd ye mightn't meet his match. So far as all sorts, kinds and descriptions of roguery, trickery an' desait was concerned, Doalty was a masther-man; and proud of it, too. The good point about Doalty, an' the redeemin' one, was that he never sthrove to conceal his roguery—only in so far as he might have to do so, to save his own skin. He'd chait you to your face, an' then laugh at you. And he never thought he got half the benefit of his roguery if he hadn't got half the worr!

to join him in the merriment over it. And it's seldom times but he'd get plenty of help to laugh at ye; for, so cleverly always did he contrive to chait ye that ye'd have to join in the laugh yourself when it was all over an' confess that his desaits had more divilment in them than downright dishonesty; and ye'd have less gains than pains if ye choose to take it otherwise.

Doalty used to say that ivery man in the worr! was born to an estate that he had to live by, and that his estate was his wits. It was his boast that he was the biggest rogue in the Barony, bar one—and that one a poor, pious divil of a beggar man that we called the *Baccach Ruadh*—or red beggar man—becase he carried about on him a head that was like little else in the worr! than a whin-bush afire. And though the *Baccach Ruadh* prayed like a patriarch, an' held himself up as a moral of right livin' for the parish to copy, Doalty he had a most unconscionable dislike to him, hated him like poison, sayed that he was Roguery itself with a man's skin hung on it; and that, bad as he was himself—an' that was bad enough, the Lord knows—he'd be long sorry to swap his chances of Heaven with the *Baccach Ruadh* rascal; an' anyone iver heerd him ratin' the poor, pious soul at this rate always laughed, for every man, woman an' chile, from the head of the parish to the foot of it, held that the pray'n powers of the beggar man alone had long ago qualified him to take a place in the Almanac.

But, for all Doalty O'Doherty's cleverness and cuteness, people at length grew to know him so well, and to ex-



pect roguery off him so, that it soon became a sore struggle for him to earn a daicent livin' by desait. When he had fooled people by a trick once, he durisen't try the same again, but had to plot an' plan a new one. If there's a good dhraw upon it the best spring'll go dry afore the summer's over; an' so will the best brains give in, an' the greatest wits run out, at length. Doalty, though he knew as many different tricks as you could shake a stick at, near a'most worked them all out, an' run the rigs, till he found himself, as people believed, at the end of his tether at last; an' till he confessed himself that it was purty hard for an honest man to live—especially in a country where he was too well known.

And so poor Doalty made up his mind that he'd have at last to leave the place where the best part of his life was spent, and go elsewhere to break new ground. But afore he'd go, he'd another and a last trick up his sleeve, which he determined to play off upon his old friends afore he'd leave, an' by it rogue as much money off them as would give him a good start in his new life—in America; for it was there he had resolved to go.

Doalty, as soon as he had made this resolve and thoroughly planned his trick, went and got two of his old comrades, Jaimsy Melly and Micky Noonan—two lads that were second only to himself in rascality and roguery—and he opened up his scheme, with all its pros and cons, to them, by raison that he needed their help in carryin' it out safely and profitably, and couldn't manage it without them at all, at all. And for Jaimsy's and Micky's trouble, Doalty promised to recompense them generously with a share of the proceeds.

"This, boys," says Doalty, says he to them, "will be my last an' final shroke of business at Knockagar, God bliss it. And I must manage to make it a good and a successful and a profitable one, and one, moreover, that'll reflect credit on me, and give my oul' friends and neighbors good raison to remember poor Doalty when he's gone.

"This," says he, "is Tuesday night.

That leaves me—Wednesday one, Thursday two, Friday three, Saturday four—just four more days to live—you needn't look frightened, boys. On Saturday night I mane to take a very seavair attack of the colic, or heart disease, or any other handy complaint," says he, "an' die a purty hard daith afore there's time to fetch doctor or clargy, or any help whatsomever."

"Yous boys," says Doalty, "ill happen to be in my little house with me—just makin' a passin' call on your way back from Donegal market—dhropped in to let me sample the remains of a bottle of whisky that yous had taken with ye out of Donegal for company's sake—yourselves and the bottle of whisky, I say, will happen to be the only people in the house with me when I'm taken with the suddint sickness; an' yous'll do what yous can for me, an' stick by me till I croak. And," says he, "as it'll be too late in the night, an' too dark—for there'll not be a bit of a moon any bigger than a lead pencil a Saturday night—an' too far from any other house, yous'll not alarm the country till Sunday mornin'; but, instead, yous'll wash me, an' shave me, an' lay me out. Do ye undherstand me, lads?"

The lads, sure enough, were gradually beginnin' to show signs of undherstandin' Doalty, for there was a grin growin' over the faces of them both.

"All Saturday night," says he, "yous is to sit up with the corp, an' enjoy the wake all by yourselves—an' myself wishes yous a merry time. On Sunday mornin'," says Doalty, "havin' me all ready, trig and nately dressed, an' my face an' hands whiter an' paler than ever they looked in their life afore, yous are to call in the help of the first two or three strappin' mountain lads yous see comin' down the hill, throttin' for mass in the mornin'. The mountain boys," says he, "they're ever the earliest birds, an' the first at the chapel, bekase they have the furthestest to come. Yous'll call in," says he, "a couple of these strappin' mountain lads, an' yous'll take the back door off its hinges—carefully, lads, carefully," says he, "by raison that the doore-case is thremlin'—take it, I

say, off its hinghes, and make a stretcher of it, an' put a pair of handshakes under it; and then," says he, "by the help of the mountain lads hoist the corp off, an' away to the chapel—the first of the congregation, and plant it by the chapel gate to gather me debts."

For, as all the worri' is aware, when a sowl died in them days, an' left no money behind him to square his conscience with the shopkeepers—if he was in their books—or to pay for the wake an' buryin'—his neighbors fetched the corpse to the chapel gate upon a stretcher, an' laid it there with a plate on its breast, for the charitable to reach their hand with help as they passed, an' lay down a tu'penny bit, or whatsomever else they chose to give.

"If yous do your part well," says Doalty, says he to the boys, "I'll turn a good penny on Sunday, as much as'll carry me from the country, an' put me past want for a while to come. There isn't a sowl or sinner'll pass me on Sunday without puttin' less or more on the plate; for there isn't a sowl or sinner in the parish but either likes or hates me. Them likes me'll be glad to help to bury me; and I'll give ye my word that them hates me'll be double as delighted to help me in undher the sod."

All that was surely true; an' Jaimsy and Micky admitted as much. And right heartily they were pleased to lend a hand at the same trick—for they seen it was goin' to be a money-makin' one, an' the boudest an' most extraordinary of all the bould an' extraordinary tricks they ever knew to come out of Doalty O'Doherty's head. It was a trick after their own hearts, an' it just enchanted them. An' they told Doalty as much, an' promised him that they were his men for the move, an' give him their hands on it, an' went home chucklin' an' laid themselves out for to be ready again Saturday night. They were a pair of boys as close as a chist—an' right well Doalty knew this—so that a whisper or a breath, mark, sign or token of what was goin' to happen, wasn't known or draimt of by man or mortal atween the ends of the parish.

On Saturday night themselves an'

Doalty—who, poor man, was then underboard—had a rousin' fine wake, for all three of them sat up all night having a little bit of a jollification. Tor'st mornin' they shaved Doalty as clean as a scraped pig, an' dhressed him, puttin' on him a long white sheet down to his toes, whitened his hands and face beautifully, and made him stretch out as straight an' stiff as a ramrod. They complimented him on the lovely corp he made; an' they agreed it was a rare pity he wasn't dead in earnest. Doalty, himself, too, when he heard how handsome a corp he made, was more than half sorry; and he sayed he always had the feelin', anyhow, that he'd be a gentleman when he'd be dead.

But, no matter for that. It was early on Sunday mornin' when the word—put out, of course, by Jaimsy and Micky—went over the parish, as fast as a moor afire, that poor Doalty O'Doherty—Lord rest his sowl!—was dead—died suddintly, about midnight the night afore, of a bad colic he took in his stomach becase of a supper of sowins he ate that same evenin'.

He hadn't aither priest or doctor, moreover, nor one but Jaimsy Melly, of the Brown Knowe, and Micky Noonan, of Killymard, who, as God sent it, happened to dhrop into Doalty's wee house to get a coal for their pipes, on their way back from Donegal market. Poor Doalty was in the agonies when they landed in, and it was a miracle, people sayed, that he didn't die without seein' a sinner, or a sinner to see him. Within less nor an hour after they come into the house Doalty O'Doherty's soul was in heaven, or at the halfway house. And there was consternation over the parish.

Meanwhile, Jaimsy Melly and Micky Noonan, being on the lookout, got hold of the first gang of mountain boys who come down the hill, an' they laid down the back door, as they were directed, an' stretched the corp on it, an' made the mountain lads—after they'd knelt down an' put up a hearty prayer for Doalty's soul—shoulder it an' go.

They gave poor Doalty a purty quick march to the chapel, so as to be there

the first of the congregation; an' they laid him out, on the door, on the road-side, quite contagious to the chapel gate, just as the people were beginnin' to arrive. And they borrowed a long tin plate out of Mary Hannigan's, who lived next door to the graveyard, over the road a bit, an' set it on Doalty's stomach, for the charitable and the good-hearted to dhrop their tenpennies there.

And the charitable and the good-hearted were noways slow about doing that; for it was a charitable and a good-hearted parish was Knockagar. The tenpennies, as the congregation now gathered, was soon hopping on the plate like hailstones.

Every man, woman and child of them, as they come up, dhropped on their pair of knees by the side of the stretcher, an' put up a prayer for poor Doalty; and many's the woman dallied alongside, too, to discuss the corp, an' his suddint daith, with her neighbor. Sighle Sheerin, Owen a-Sheerin's widow, after she'd said her prayer an' got up to her feet again, looks down at the corp, an' she shakes her tenpennies, an' chucks her tongue in her mouth.

"Thuck! Thuck!" says she—an' she addresses Nancy Ward, of the Back-o'-the-Hill—"Nancy, a *stoir*," she says, "who'd have believed that Doalty O'Doherty would slip off so aisy?"

"Not me," says Nancy.

"Nor surely me," says Sighle. "Ye might aisy have perswaded me that he'd go off suddint, but not so quate; for it was always my prophecy that the hangman'ud finish him."

They say the ears of the corp moved. At laist Jaimsy and Micky told it so, long after, anyhow; and told, too, that they got into a white sweat themselves, an' tried to get Mrs. Sheerin to move off an' into the chapel. But Mrs. Sheerin, afore she'd go, wanted to know off Jaimsy did he die aisy or die hard. An' Jaimsy give her to undherstand that, though his conscience was puttin' mortal sore on Doalty at first, he got more paiceful half an hour afore he died, an' expressed sorrow from his sowl for all his rogueries and rascalities, an' when

it come to the last of all he went off, Jaimsy assured Mrs. Sheerin, an' the bunch of open-mouthed women who had congregated around her—went off like a sleepin' baby.

"Poor divil!" says Mrs. Sheerin, an' ivery oul' woman there, in one pityin' voice. "Poor divil!" says they, "God rest him!"

"Well," says Molly Maguire, who was there from Dhrimadart—"Well," says she, lookin' down at Doalty, too, an' shakin' her head woefully over him—"Well," says she, "Doalty O'Doherty, myself doesn't wondher one but that ye had a sore time with your conscience; for the worrl' knows there was many a blister on it."

Then Jaimsy an' Micky they got mighty narvous, for the corpse's ears they were (they tell) cocked fearsomely, an' they couldn't tell what terrible catastrophe might happen any minute. But ye might as well move Croach-an-Airgid mountain as move a crowd of oul' women, when they get gossipin' ill gossip about a friend; an' Jaimsy an' Micky to their vexin' found that.

"He's dead, poor man," says Sighle Sheerin, "an' it isn't for me to spaik ill of him, or I'd say that your words is gospel truth, Mrs. Maguire. An' see, too, how calm an' paiceful he looks," says she—"just see to it, will yous? One'ud think he was so innocent-livin' that butter wouldn't melt in his mouth, instead of bein' what he was—an' the Lord forgive me for spaikin' truth!—the biggest rogue iver run on two legs."

Says Molly Maguire: "The biggest scoundrel ever cheated the gal-lows."

In mortal terror Jaimsy an' Micky rooted out the clutch of oul' women by main force, an' dhrove them off—purtendin' to be mighty vexed that they'd be so onchristian as to speak ill of the dead. And then Jaimsy and Micky removed themselves likewise, so as not to be too closely identified with what might happen.

It must have put hard on the poor corp in his inside; but so manly an' determined was he that he never moved a muscle of his countenance.

But faith he was time enough to do that till his big thril come, as very soon it did—and the great catastrophy of the day, which has made it be remembered since.

And it was the very selfsame *Baccach Ruadh* that he hated so heartily, who fetched it all on. The very first man to arrive at the chapel that day, afore the gates was opened, even—as was ever an' always the case with this pious beggar and mighty prayer—was the *Baccach Ruadh*. And he was in the chapel prayin' at the rate of a race horse, in a voice as loud as a man in a mill, when he heerd the word—it was wee Annie Carriton from Doaghbeg that whispered it to him—heerd the word that Doalty O'Doherty had died suddint the night afore, and his corp was just now without the gate—fetchd down the road by the mountain boys—and was begging for the burial.

You couldn't say "Knife!" till the *Baccach* was disappeared out of the chapel. And the next minute he was on his knees beside the stretcher, and prayin' fast and furious "for the repose of the sowl of this sinful wratch"—so he put it—"who was suddenly stricken in his wickedness."

And the passing crowds who wouldn't otherwise have thought worse of poor Doalty than that he'd been a frolicksome lad with his heart in the right place, all groaned for him now, and shook their heads over him, and prayed hard for him, for they couldn't help thinking that he had a purty poor chance; and they rattled down the tenpennies on the tin plate.

Now, for a dead man, the lid of one of Doalty O'Doherty's eyes wasn't, maybe, shut as tight down as the eye of a dacent dead man should be. And this piece of a sliver of an eye opened a bit wider when it heerd the voice of the *Baccach Ruadh* ringin' over it. It wasn't by any means a pleasin' sight to the poor corp to behold the beggar man that he hated worse nor a dhrink of poison, kneelin' at his side, and then leavin' down his two dirty elbows on his stomach to pray over him.

But when the *Baccach* started to make

him out a scoundrel, and to sing out a catalogue of thirteen commandments that—the *Baccach* allowed—he bruck every day of his life, and to deplore his sins, and to weep for them, and to get the crowds to help to deplore them, and weep for them, every vein in the corpse's body begun to tingle, and he'd give a hundred pound, if he had it, to be able to reach his hand, and take hold of the villainous vagabone by the throat and choke him there and then. But, unfortunately, to his vexation, he couldn't do that. The only blink of consolation he had was that the *Baccach's* prayers fetchd down more tenpennies on the plate.

But, bad as he felt then, there was a mortal sight worse to come; for, after a while, when the thick of the crowd had prayed and passed on, and the next dhrift hadn't yet come up, the *Baccach* slowed down a bit in his prayers, and he took half a dozen stealthy looks over his shoulder, and about him, on all sides. The eye of Doalty was followin' him close, and he wondhered in his heart what was it was comin' now, anyhow. But he wouldn't have even dhraimt what raily did happen. He seen that the *Baccach* all at once, as soon as he found the coast clear, begun raisin' his voice higher, an' prayin' faster an' noisier, like a man who is goin' to thry to cloak somethin'; and the next minute, when his prayers was at their very loudest and very fastest, and his eyes turned up to the skies, like a Sent in a picture—only they were rowlin', and there was more white in them than would make a bed-sheet—he—he—oh—the poor dum-founded corpse itself couldn't believe its own eye!—he stretched out his hand and it went gropin' till it got into the plate, where it spread its claws and gathered up about the size of ten shillings of tenpennies, and coolly dhrw them out, and put them into the pocket of the *Baccach's* cotamor!

Here was a purty predicament for poor Doalty O'Doherty! Under his very nose to be robbed of hard-earned money! And that, moreover, by the only one hypocrite in the parish that he heartily hated! And afereed to move

as much as his little finger, to stop the scoundhrel, and to expose him for the hypocritical rascal he now proved himself!

As the next dhriфт of people passed and dhropped their tenpennies, the beggar was beatin' his breast like a thrasher, an' groanin' like a bullock, an' callin' on Heaven "to have pity an' marcy on the wratch who lies here, stricken down in his sins an' rascalities." And the minute they were safely past he was gleekin' over both of his shoulders again, and then, with his eyes turned up to heaven, and the voice of him leveled at the stars, the hand went out once again, feelin' for the plate; and this time he landed a second gowpen of tenpennies safe and sound in the pocket of his cotamoor, afore an invasion of people come up again. And if the eye of Doalty O'Doherty had only been able to shoot swords, the beggar would have been skewered through his heart.

But, unfortunately, it wasn't. So, although the inside of him was boilin', he had still to lie there like an icicle at Christmas. And when the next knot of people were passin', he listened to the beggar abusin' an' slanderin' him again, under pretext of prayin' for his sowl; and, when the people had passed, looked at him, while the eyes of him rolled like a duck in thunder—raichin' out the hand a third time, an' clawin' up off the plate double as much as before—the most barefaced and aggravatin' daylight robbery he'd ever beheld. And Doalty O'Doherty's furious rage—no wonder—got the better of him; so that he stretched out his arm, and got a grip of the *Baccach's* hand at the wrist, just as it was leavin' the plate with a full cargo. The *Baccach*, the instant he found the grip on his wrist—for he didn't see anything, of course, by *raison* that his eyes was in the skies—he opened his throat and let out of it such a screech that might well have been heard in the middle of the week afore.

Doalty, he had a grip in his hand like cast steel, and he give the beggar's wrist, at that, a squeeze that made him leap like a billy-goat, and roar again like a bull; and "Dhrop it, ye devil ye,

dhrop it!" says Doalty, says he, atween his teeth.

No second invitation the beggar needed. The fingers of him opened wide, and let the gowpen of tenpennies rattle into the plate again.

"And now ye consecrated scoundhrel, ye," says Doalty, says he, "empty back into the plate again the pocket of your walie-coat, or be the powdher, as sure as I'm lyin' here a corp, I'll bust every bone in your yalla carcage."

But the minute Doalty dhropped the fellow's hand, the fright bein' too great on him to wait to empty the walie-coat, he tuk to his heels an' made the clanest race he ever did in his life afore, an' bawlin' as he went like a bull a-stickin'.

"Come back, come back, ye natarnal villain ye," shouts Doalty. But he might as well whistle jigs for a milestone. "By my hand," then says Doalty, says he to himself, "I'm not goin' to lose the pocket of tenpennies the wretch has off with him, an' lose me revenge both at oncet."

And without a second thought my boul' Doalty was on his feet, and had grabbed up the plate of money, and, all in his long white shirt—for he neither waited nor, I suppose, thought of takin' it off—was off along the road at the top of his speed, and he yellin' like murder on the red fella to stop. And when the red fella looked behind him and seen the corp comin' afther at top speed, he stretched both his legs and his lungs for all they were worth.

The pair of them purty soon meet up with more bands of people comin' to mass, and when these saw and found what was happenin' they wheeled about with small loss of time, and it was a hard sthrive atween every one of them and the *Baccach* which'd be the first and which last; and every perch of ground they went they were meetin' more chapel people, who joined at once in both the fright and the flight; and the further they went the bigger the dhrove was swellin', till very soon there was the size of a fair of tariffied men, women and children leapin' an' sthrugglin', risin' an' fallin', pushin' an' crushin', gallopin' an' yellin' over the country—for all of them kept together for fear's

sake—the *Baccach Ruadh* in the midst of them all, and he, surely, the most tarried there, and Doalty O'Doherty, with his long white shirt and his collection plate, spangin' forward behind, and gettin' closer to them at every spang; for every other step he went the madness was risin' in him to get his hands on the hypocrite.

And from the fair weakness that the fright fetched on him, the *Baccach's* knees at length begun to thrimble under him, and he dropped: but he was callin', an' beseechin', an' implorin' the people not to fly away and leave him to his fate. But it was ivery man to his own han' like Bruce among the beggars, there, that mornin', an' no one thought of any other if he could only get safe himself.

When Doalty got up to the fallen beggar he didn't take time to give any heed to the fella's prayers for mercy, only rolled him over on his side till he got at the pocket of the walie-coat, an' emptied back out of it ivery stiver the lad had stolen. And then he quietly put aside his collection plate, and begun to pummel the red fellow's ribs an' malavogue him without marcy. "For five years gone, ye scoundhrel, ye," says Doalty, says he, "I never clapped my eyes on your hypocritical countenance but me fists was itchin' to be throuncin' ye; an' now that I have the chance if I quit ye afore I have made stirabout of your bones, may the curse of the crows light on Doalty O'Doherty."

An' it's little doubt I have that he'd have carried out his threat, if it wasn't that, afore he was rightly begun, Jaimsy Melly an' Micky Noonan come up frightened an' pantin' for breath, an' hauled him off the beggar by main force.

They told him that Mr. M'Cran the Crowney from Ballyshannon was passin' through, on his way from Gleaniny, where he'd been sittin' on a poor fella who'd been got dead in his own pratiefiel'; that he got wind of Doalty's sudden death, an' had come to the chapel to get hold of the corp, an' earn another five-poun' note, by having a sitting on it.

"So, Doalty," says they, "if ye don't want Mr. M'Cran to sit on ye an' prove ye out dead in spite of your nose ye'd better make a clean run for it in good time."

It was good time, for the country was gettin' under the win' of the rale thruth of the matter; an' a bad storm was brewin'.

Doalty took good care to grab the contents of the plate, first thing. It was only then he minded of his shirt.

"Boys," says he, as he hauled it off, an' threw it at Jaimsy Melly's feet, "that's a fine shirt, an' yous can keep it for your trouble. Good-by!"

An' then he showed them a clean pair of heels. And though he himself didn't never after show his face in them parts, it was a lee an' long time afore people begun to forget the Day of Doalty O'Doherty.



## AN EPITAPH

HERE lies a crank on tablet food—  
He ate it till he grew so slim  
He made no shadow where he stood,  
And hence this tablet stands for him.

Y. KNOTT.



# THE SWEET GIRL GRADUATE

By Dorothy Dix



AM going to graduate on Wednesday," said Maud, as she sank into my big Morris chair, and with a discretion beyond her age slipped a dull green cushion so that it would form a background for her golden head.

"They didn't graduate babies in my day," I said, severely.

"I am eighteen," Maud retorted, with dignity, and then she added with girlish enthusiasm, "and I am going to graduate in all the ologies, and isms, and a love of a white organdie dress with real lace, and I want you to come and hear me read my essay. It's a sweet thing about——"

"'My Boat is Launched, but Where is the Shore,'" I murmured reminiscently.

"How did you guess?" she asked.

"Oh," I replied, "I propounded the same conundrum to an admiring audience of friends and relatives myself some twenty years ago, but," I put in, hastily, "I will come. It is always a distinct privilege to see so many people who have finished their education."

Maud smiled, and then, because there is no other thing in the world so appealing as a young girl who stands "where the brook and river meet," so wise in the theories of life and so ignorant of its actualities, so confident of herself, yet doomed to make such mistakes and retrieve her errors through such bitter tears, I continued:

"My dear," I said, "I know that at such a time as this everybody is loading you down with bushels of flowery advice, just as we burden our friends, who are starting out on a journey, with bour-

quets that they throw out of the window as soon as they get out of the Grand Central Station. Your teachers will tell you to join university extension courses, and keep up your studies, and read a little Latin every day, just to refresh your mind. Solemn gentlemen in black will inform you that you are the mothers of the future, and prate to you about woman's sacred sphere and woman's holy influence, and all of the other dear, time-honored platitudes that men think suitable for the occasion.

"There will not seem to be any rush about acting on their advice. You can do it any time in the next forty or fifty years, but I would like to give you a few hints about things as they really are, that you may find available for immediate use."

Maud poured herself out another cup of tea. "Go on," she said, "girls nowadays aren't so bread-and-buttery as they look, and I have often wondered what one really needed to know in life, for, oh," wistfully, "I want to be happy, I want to be popular and successful, I want to live my life so that it will be the best for me, and everyone about me."

"The first bit of warning I can give you, then," I returned, "is this: Don't know too much.

"This probably seems an impossibility to one who belongs to the awe-inspiring class of college girls. You know it all. You feel that you do, and that an anxious world is waiting to have you set it right. This is an illusion. There is a deep and ineradicable prejudice against women who know too much, and the worst part of it is that it is just. Women haven't learned how to conceal

information yet, and you can't form any idea of how formidable knowledge can become until a woman gets possession of it. A woman can make you more tired with one single solitary fact than a man can with a whole encyclopedia of information. You have seen men who had degrees conferred on them by foreign universities for great learning or proficiency in dead languages, or marvelous scientific discoveries, and who were still as simple and unpretentious as a little child.

"Few women can do this. The one thing that has given the higher education of women the blackest eye is the habit college girls have of going about flooring people with awful questions about what they think the inner meaning of the 'Götterdämmerung' is, or what was the psychic significance of the utterances of Balaam's ass? When a woman possesses an unusual piece of information she can't help bragging about it and showing off how smart she is, which is not only bad form, but rank idiocy, for cleverness in a woman is still something she has to apologize for.

"Don't try to look as if you knew it all. If you can inform people they may consider you interesting, but when they can enlighten your ignorance, they think you enchanting. Above all, never correct anybody's grammar, statistics or pronunciation. It is better to be admired and liked than it is to be an oracle.

"Having acquired the substantial of an education, add some frills to it. Learn to play cards, to tell fortunes, to sing, to play the banjo, anything so it is diverting and amusing. It may not give you a very high idea of your fellow-creatures' intelligence to find out that the majority of them prefer ragtime to grand opera, but it is a truth nevertheless. I did not make life, and I am merely calling your attention to a few elementary facts as they exist. One of these is that people prefer to be amused to being instructed and elevated. The woman who is most sought after and admired is the one who knows how to ease down the strenuousness of life by doing a lot of diverting things. Between the ability to read Greek and read

the lines in one's hands, the amateur palmist has the advantage every time.

"Don't overestimate your talents until you try them. We all know girls who, like Charles Lamb's hero, could be anything if they had a mind to. They give us to understand that the only reason that they are not Maria Mitchells, or George Eliots, or Charlotte Cushman is because they don't care about it. There is a lot of difference between theory and practice.

"You may have observed that the college man is never as imposing a creature as the college girl. One reason is that just as soon as he is out of college he has to bring his school knowledge into competition with the knowledge of people who are already doing practical things, and he emerges from that experience with a chastened and humble spirit.

"It would do every girl good to run up against just such cold, hard facts, and find out how little she really does know. You may have been the shining light in your higher mathematics class, but it takes a whole folio to figure out how much a muslin dress comes to at sixteen and two-third cents a yard, while the little shop girl can do the sum in her head without winking. Your compositions were probably the pride of the school, but you couldn't sell them to any editor living for ten cents a dozen. You have a medal for elocution as big as a breastplate, but an actor would tell you that you didn't know how to even pronounce your words. Don't brag about your talents until you have some better authority for it than the opinion of your schoolmates.

"Don't take yourself too seriously. Of course, you feel you have a mission now. We all do when we are young. You don't know what it is exactly, but it is something great, and solemn, and noble, and has to do with the reforming of the universe. You feel you have a duty to the world. It is very lovely and ideal, but, my dear child, it will not last. After you have grown older, and have made mistakes and repented them, and strayed from the path you meant to tread, and got lost, and only found your way back

after you had torn your hands on the briars, and stumbled, and fallen and hurt yourself, then you will feel that you have about all you can do to take care of your own morals, and keep yourself out of trouble. You won't be so anxious then to undertake to reform other people, or engage in mission work on general principles.

"Don't be too contemptuous of those sisters who have never had the advantage of the higher education for women. There are other sources of information besides text-books, and the day will surely come, when you are married and in a home of your own, and Adolphus Augustus makes scathing remarks about the food, that you would be glad to exchange your degree in chemistry for some reliable information about how to make bread rise, and when you will discover with tears and lamentations that a complete course in political economy hasn't fitted you to cope with the butcher bills and the ice man.

"Don't run off with the career craze. It is the greatest misfortune that besets womankind to-day. Of course you and your chum have been indulging in heroic dreams where you scorned the ordinary domestic lot of women, and agreed that it would be a shame for two such transcendent geniuses to be lost to the world by marrying and becoming merely housekeepers. You have thought that you would like a flat, where you could live girl bachelor fashion, with a latchkey, and a chafing dish, and other Bohemian and dyspeptic appurtenances, and be famous, and all the rest of it, that is so easy in romance and so hard and heart-breaking in reality.

"My dear girl, if you have the necessity of earning your living, go forth as bravely and earnestly as you may, and God help you, but if you have a good home, and a father willing and able to support you, for goodness' sake stay in it, and behave yourself. Every woman who has a 'career' pays for it with youth, and health, and strength, and tears, and loneliness, and it isn't worth the price. Don't worry about knowing too much, or think that your fine education will be wasted. You are liable to

need all that you know, and a little more, just in common everyday life.

"Don't snub your parents. In spite of all that is said to the contrary, those who are nearest and dearest to us do not always appear surrounded by a halo. Your mother may seem to you a very ordinary woman, with old-fashioned ideas and an execrable taste in dress and household decoration. There's nothing in the least romantic-looking to you about her, and you have never dreamed of classing her with those heroines which, in your youthful enthusiasm, you have worshipped from time to time. Sit down quietly a moment and think if you know anything in the world, if history or romance gives any finer example of perfect self-sacrifice and self-abnegation than that of a woman who deliberately educates and raises her children above herself. She knows how it will be. She never deceives herself about it. She knows that she is opening gates that were closed to her, and that where her children go she may not follow. She knows that she will be no longer an authority to them; that they will outgrow her, leave her, in time, perhaps, God help her, be ashamed of her.

"The country is full of mothers who are slaving over cooking stoves and toiling over sewing machines that Sallie may not only be educated in some fine college, but that she may have the college colors, and the college ring, and the class pin, and do as other girls.

"It is always the same story. Everything is to be all right when Sallie comes home to diffuse light and knowledge and be a comfort, and stay, and pleasure. But, alas! how often is Sallie a disappointment! Her poor, foolish head has been turned. Nothing suits her. She corrects the family manners, and revises the family pronunciation, and sets the house by the ears. She doesn't consider it worth while to take any trouble to please her parents. Her father may have spent thousands of dollars on her musical education, but she won't even play him a ballad in the twilight. She may have had the best masters in elocution, but she won't read him a column in the daily papers. Many

a man must have looked at his daughter as she came from school and thought he got precious little for his investment. My dear girl, just as a matter of common honesty, and gratitude, spend a little of your time and attention and enthusiasm on your parents.

"Finally, beloved, remember all that you have learned only fits you to enter the kindergarten class of life. You are going to matriculate now in the big university of experience, where there are no text-books, and conflicting rules, and we must each work out our own little problem by ourselves. You will make many mistakes. Your slate will be blurred with tears, many and many a time, and the hard schoolmaster will scourge you for being too late, and for

talking in school, and for making wrong answers.

"Don't get discouraged. Keep trying, and keep a brave heart. As the years go by you will learn many things that are new and strange, and unlearn many things that you used to know. You won't feel so sure about knowing things, or be so anxious to speak up and answer the hard questions of life.

"It is all in the day's lesson, but remember this, that no brilliancy or cleverness in a woman ever made up for the lack of womanly gentleness and sweetness and tenderness. Don't cultivate your head at the expense of your heart. A kiss is better than repartee on a woman's lips, and love can make all other knowledge seem foolishness. Try it."



## THE GLIMPSE

AS ONE who lived far inland day by day,  
 And knew in legend only or in dream  
 The open Deep, yet 'ere he passed away  
 Went down at last by rill and widening stream,  
 And, tottering to a cliff, beheld the Sea,  
 And woke to life's more luminous lost sweep,  
 And in his one hour asked regretfully  
 To slumber there beside that alien Deep—  
 So I, God grant, who sometimes hear above  
 Earth's din the Sea, and thro' this restless sleep  
 Have caught thin momentary echoes of  
 Life's better things, and my poor broken dreams  
 Of Beauty known, shall some day yet with love  
 Of wider visions follow Hope's thin streams,  
 And ere the twilight falls shall humbly creep,  
 By many paths where many sorrows wend,  
 Out to the last lone headland, and there sleep  
 By my belated Ocean, in the end!

ARTHUR STRINGER.

# STORIES OF THE STREET

## VI.—ON A SLENDER MARGIN

By L. J. Van Ness



THE biggest men in Wall Street—the newspapers' "Napoleons of finance"—are not necessarily members of the New York Stock Exchange; many an operator whose influence on stock values has made itself felt from Maine to California, has never been nearer the floor of the Exchange than the gallery, which hangs some thirty feet or so above that floor.

Young Reverdy—he was always "Young Reverdy" to the Street, even after his father's retirement—was not an Exchange member. Gallinger never could understand why; to him it seemed as though a man who could mold the market to his will, by rights should have some tangible connection with that great machine which makes the market possible.

But he did not complain—Gallinger didn't. He had been a classmate of Young Reverdy, and now he enjoyed the position of that gentleman's confidential broker; wherefore his commissions were not to be sneezed at; Young Reverdy dealt in stocks by the block of ten thousand shares, rather than by hundreds and thousands.

Wherefore, also, when Gallinger received Young Reverdy's brief note, apprising him of his return to the speculative arena and asking him to call, Gallinger was glad. His bank account had not failed to register the fact of Young Reverdy's prolonged absence. Besides, Gallinger liked Reverdy, personally.

"Why," he said to himself, "this is

quite like old times." And he smiled, softly, with an odd sensation of pleasurable anticipation, as he stepped out from the steel elevator cage when it paused at the seventh floor.

He was thinking that it was a very long time since he had entered his friend's office; and he turned to the left and down the Wall Street corridor of the Syndicate Building, presently stopping before a door whose ground-glass panel was modestly and simply lettered:

CLIFFORD REVERDY

"Gosh!" Gallinger ejaculated; "it's all of a year! My, but tempus does fugit!" And, grinning at his feeble, schoolboy joke, he turned the knob and entered. "Reverdy in?" he inquired of the yellow-haired stenographer. "He sent for me, you know."

She waved a nonchalant, white paw toward the door of Reverdy's private room.

"Go right in, Mr. Gallinger," she told him, languidly. "He's waitin', you know."

Accordingly, Gallinger went in, closing the door softly behind him. He was thinking hard—trying to recollect what it had been that had deprived the Street

of Young Reverdy's influence for all that long year. But so much happens in the year of a Stock Exchange broker that he may be pardoned for forgetting little things like the cause of a friend's absence. "Something about a girl?" Gallinger hazarded a vague guess. "I forget—"

For a moment he stood at the door, waiting. Apparently Young Reverdy had not noticed his arrival. The big man sat in his revolving chair, slewed around from his desk so that he faced the open window, on the sill of which his feet were resting. He seemed lost in reverie, staring dreamily out into the great white well of the building, with his hands clasped behind his head and an unlit cigar clinched between his teeth.

Gallinger's gaze followed Reverdy's, carelessly. The well was broad and garishly white, flooded with the fine gold of late June sunshine; on the farther side it was broken by row upon row of plate-glass windows, blank and characterless, some open to the bland spring airs, others tightly closed.

The one directly opposite Reverdy's, for instance, was wide to the winds, and framed in it Gallinger saw a woman working at a desk.

"Bynum & Shackelford's office," he thought, abstractedly; and, "Hello, Clif," he said aloud.

Reverdy swung around with a start. "Howdy, Gallinger!" he cried, his face lighting up with a welcoming smile. "How goes it?"

"Tolerably, tolerably," deprecated Gallinger. "You're looking well."

"I am," affirmed Young Reverdy, heartily.

He was, and he did look it. Southern suns had tinted his boyish, good-humored features with a clean, transparent wash of brown. Exercise and a year's living in the open had robbed him of all superfluous tissue. As he stood up to shake Gallinger's hand, he fairly dwarfed that rather corpulent broker. A sheer, lean six feet of bone, muscle and manhood—that was Clifford Reverdy.

But Gallinger, looking into his eyes,

saw in them a strained, steady expression that was something new. His memory again groped back among the dead issues of the past year.

"I do believe it was a girl," he told himself. "Lemme see; what was her name?"

But Reverdy was telling him to sit down and make himself comfortable, and at once his attention was demanded by affairs of finance.

"Anything special on the tapis?" Gallinger wanted to know.

Reverdy smiled, engagingly.

"I should say so," he stated. "I'm so glad to be back that I'm keen for work, Gallinger. I think we'll start a bull movement in Erie, just for a flyer."

For some minutes the two men discussed ways and means, earnestly, Reverdy laying down the law, Gallinger concurring, expostulating or meekly accepting his instructions. His business brain was fully occupied with the weighing of measures toward their common end, with the recording of Reverdy's commands; but subconsciously he did not cease to watch his friend's face, to note the changes that the year had wrought in the man. Particularly he speculated about that pained look in Reverdy's eyes.

"Umm," he thought, in the middle of an argument, "it *was* a girl. I remember now. Refused him and broke his heart—something of the sort—like a fool woman. Why, there isn't a better man in the world than Clif Reverdy! Went away to forget her, I suppose. What the dickens was her name, now?"

"Well," Reverdy said, finally, "you go ahead and put that through, and we'll make the bear crowd sit up and take notice."

"Right," assented Gallinger. He penciled a memorandum or two on the back of an envelope and put it away, rising from his chair.

"Don't go," Reverdy told him. "Sit down and have a talk. Cigar?"

"Thank you," consented Gallinger. "Trip do you good, Clif?" he asked, trimming the weed.

"Lots." Reverdy glanced at him sharply. "I'm cured," he stated.



Gallinger started.

"Cured? Eh, what? Oh, yes!" He laughed awkwardly, vainly cudgeling his wits. "Who was that girl, anyway?"

Reverdy swung aimlessly in his chair, knitting his fingers.

"Yes, cured," he repeated, to himself only. "Cured, praises be! I'm a love-sick calf no longer—and that's something to be thankful for!" He forgot, in his self-congratulation, that time can but cicatrize a wound; it cannot obliterate—the scar remains; and sometimes the wound beneath it throbs heartrendingly, sometimes even breaks out afresh.

His chair became stationary, with his face toward the open window, his gaze irresistibly drawn across the air shaft to the face of the woman who bent over her desk. This, however, Gallinger failed to remark. Reverdy began to fidget clumsily for that which he would know.

"Many changes?" he asked, carelessly. "New faces in the Street?"

"Oh, some," Gallinger told him. "Nothing much—everything just about the same."

This was unsatisfactory.

"At least," Reverdy laughed, uneasily, "I see that Bynum & Shackelford have a new stenographer."

Gallinger looked, and, looking, realized.

"Oh, by thunder! Helen Shackelford!" he remembered suddenly. "Why, that's—I suppose so," he ended, lamely. "Old Shackelford's dead, you know," he blurted out.

"What!" Reverdy faced him again.

"Yes—six months ago. Didn't you hear about it? Heart failure, I believe—something of the sort. Left everything to his daughter, I'm told."

"To Helen, eh?" Reverdy's tone was as calm as he could have wished. "And who's Bynum's partner now?" he asked.

"Why—er—" Gallinger stammered—"I wonder if he doesn't recognize her? I don't want to rouse sleeping dogs!" he disclaimed, mentally—"Why—er—some relative of old Shackelford's, I understand," he replied.

And Gallinger was much relieved when Reverdy's opportune fit of musing afforded him the chance to get away without having to answer any more embarrassing questions.

For that matter, Reverdy himself was glad to see the last of Gallinger—for that day, at least. He had learned from him that which he desired to know. And now he wanted to think.

Reverdy did his thinking with his face to the window, his eyes upon Helen Shackelford's unconscious profile. Reverdy could not see it very plainly, just then, because of the distance; but its distracting perfection was something that he had known very intimately—a year back—and he had no need of glasses to refresh his mental vision. So he sat in silence for a time, watching her while he twisted his long, strong fingers together until the knuckles showed pale and hard beneath the dark skin.

He was musing soberly, cautiously casting back to the dear days that were dead—dead to them both; and he was testing his heart. To his relief it was behaving itself, like the reliable, steady-going heart it should have been.

"That's all right," he told himself at length, hopefully; "I'm cured. Guess there isn't much doubt about that—now. 'Ah, Helen, Helen!' He apostrophized the girl's shoulders as she turned in her chair to speak to some one in the room—how well the man knew that pretty toss of her head that signified her aroused attention!—"Ah, Helen, Helen! A year ago, if some one had told me I could see you *now* without this heart of mine jumping like a mad thing, I'd have laughed at him. But it's quiet enough to-day, Helen—didn't stir even when first I recognized you. I'm cured—I guess. And I'm glad. . . . All the same," he added, after a while, "I'd like to know what you're doing in a broker's office, Helen. Bynum isn't the sort that you'd naturally pick to associate with, you know."

He carefully assured himself that it was merely curiosity that was agitating him; for Reverdy discovered himself very restless, suddenly. And when the

girl came to the window and stood looking out for a moment, meditatively; biting the tip of a pencil, the man drew himself back into the shadows, that she might not see him watching.

"But you're still beautiful, Helen," he said, under his breath; "I used to think you the most wonderful woman in the world. And—well, you were. Perhaps you still are, to another chap. Are you? You might well be, with your beauty, your hair—I'll not forget it—like spun bronze, your eyes that are like the sea, Helen, and the curve of your throat that— Ah!"

And Young Reverdy drew back again, abruptly. For the girl had without warning lifted her head and was gazing with steady, thoughtful eyes that seemed to probe deep into the soul of Reverdy—gazing straight into his own eyes. He felt his face burning for shame at her discovery of his regard; but then he saw that she was not aware of his existence, even—had not remarked him. And he was unutterably relieved for the moment.

"No," he stoutly insisted to his heart. "No; I'm cured of you. Be quiet! But"—he paused until she had withdrawn from the window; then, slowly: "I think I'll put myself to the supreme test," he said. "I'll go over and meet her—unsuspectingly, of course. If we're to be such close neighbors—it's only decent——"

Young Reverdy's excuses were feeble enough, assuredly. Nevertheless he rose and went out into the hall, walking like a man in a dream—in a dear dream. But before he had covered half the distance between his own and the door of Bynum & Shackelford's office, he was brought to a sudden stop by the consideration: what possible reason had he to offer her for the intrusion? She had dismissed him with sufficient finality on that dark day a year ago, to provide against his further attentions. And Reverdy turned, miserably, and slunk back to his desk.

For the remainder of the afternoon he kept his eyes from the window and his mind upon fiscal problems, resolutely ignoring the state of his heart, wheth-

er or not his cure was, indeed, permanent. And though his night's sleep was broken, by the morning he had calmed into a condition of comparative sanity, wherein he was able to look upon his timidity of yesterday as an escape but little short of providential.

"There's just one thing for you to do, Clif," he told himself, severely; "keep your mind occupied with other matters. That way lies salvation." And, fortunately, the press of affairs consequent upon his year-long vacation was enough to keep him busy for a day or two.

On the morning of the third day, however, came the inevitable. Reverdy, hurrying in from the street, with his hat on the back of his head and a cigar in the corner of his mouth, all but trod blindly upon the train of a woman's skirt, as he entered the elevator: "Great heavens!" he muttered, with a swift intuition as the gate clanged. Now there *was* no escape.

"Seven," he heard her tell the elevator boy; and Reverdy knew that her voice thrilled him through and through. He looked up unhappily, and caught her eye as it was shifted swiftly from him. He bowed—his hat already in his hand—and muttered something indefinite with a tongue gone suddenly hot and dry and thick. She returned the salutation distantly.

Reverdy felt the situation keenly. He knew his face for a mirror of his emotions, and shuddered to think what an onlooker might deduce from his pitiable expression. It was a relief almost poignant that he experienced when he discovered that, barring the attendant, they two were alone in the cage.

And then he knew that he ought to speak. But what was he to say? What commonplace would suffice, after all that had passed between this girl and himself? How was he to speak, when the nearness of her took his breath away and set his heart to hammering like—

Very suddenly his heart seemed to surge upward, and, for the instant, his tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. The elevator paused in its upward flight, seemed to hesitate a brief second

—and dropped like a shot. The sensation was sickening; but in Reverdy was room for but one thought; and that was for Helen's safety. There would be the crash at the bottom, of course; and had he had the time he would have shuddered at the vision of what would follow that crash.

His brain was working with incredible swiftness. If she could be supported, held up from the floor of the cage, her injuries might be less than if—He started toward her, of a mind to catch her up in his arms.

And then the air-cushion device began to work. The car seemed to strike upon an invisible obstacle to its downward flight. It hesitated a second time, bounced giddily upward a few feet, fell again, bounced again, and came to a gradual stop in a diminishing series of dull heaves, resting finally between the second and third floors.

The attendant leaned limply against the side of the cage, and swore with heartfelt emotion. Reverdy only looked toward the girl. She was livid with fright and yet mistress of herself—and more entrancingly beautiful than he had ever known her.

"You're not hurt?" he cried. "Helen!"

"Thank you—no," she gasped, adding more calmly: "Mr. Reverdy."

Their eyes met; they were safe now. And then came the reaction. The girl laughed—a bit hysterically at first, then more calmly. But Reverdy's smile was wan and sickly. He was shaken by a little fit of rage at fate, that had treated him so scurvily; and he turned upon the elevator boy.

"What d'ye mean by this?" he demanded, unreasonably. "Let us out at once!"

The attendant eyed him with calm scorn; Reverdy was nobody to him.

"Tain't my fault," he disclaimed, sullenly. "Youse better take it easy. Mebbe they won't let us down fer haffn-hour."

"Oh, good Lord!" Reverdy groaned. "He's right," he told the girl. "It's neither his fault nor—mine. I'm sorry."

He bowed his head against the storm;

he hardly knew what he expected her to do, but he felt wretchedly to blame for something despicable, though the girl was, it seemed, rather inclined to regard the matter good-naturedly.

"Don't be sorry," She smiled bewilderingly upon him. "It can't be helped. Only it's too bad that we are both to be delayed in getting to our offices."

"I—I—" he stammered, becoming aware of her mourning gown and remembering in which memory she wore it. "I heard only day before yesterday of your loss, Miss Shackleford—and I—"

She bowed her head, the merriment dying from her eyes.

"Thank you," she murmured; "I understand."

There came an awkward, tense silence; Reverdy felt himself clothed as in a garment of ineptitude. Almost he could have wished that the air cushion had failed them, if the resultant annihilation would have involved himself alone.

"You have been away?" she asked, graciously helping him to extricate himself from what seemed hopeless embarrassment.

"Yes—Florida—for a year," he floundered. "I've a shooting box in the Everglades, you know. And you?"

"Oh, I've taken up the broker's burden," she told him, lightly. "I am now the office partner of Bynum & Shackleford."

Bynum's partner! Reverdy was fairly staggered. He had not suspected that, even in his wildest imaginings. Bynum's partner! And Bynum was one of the most unscrupulous blackguards in the Street! Did she know what she was doing, he wondered; had none warned her?

In an instant he had guessed the actual situation. The girl had been thrown upon her own resources with a few beggarly thousands—fifty or sixty at the most; for old John Shackleford, her father, had been himself a man of such admirable probity and endowed with so generous a belief in his fellow man that he had never for an instant

dreamed of the smooth rascality of his partner. For that matter, Shackleford repeatedly refused to listen to the counsels of such friends as sought to warn him of Bynum. And so Bynum had gone on for years, more or less shamelessly filching John Shackleford's fortune. Young Reverdy was of the opinion that the death of Helen's father had been the only thing that would have served to secure for the girl even a tithe of her parent's fortune.

And then—oh, it was very easy to see through Bynum's sneaking ways!—coveting her inheritance, the swindler had approached the girl with his specious offer of a continued partnership in the commission business—a partnership between a girl innocent of the wiles of the Street and a scoundrel deep-mired in its filthiest slime! Naturally, in time he would find a way to fleece her of her little patrimony!

Reverdy's soul was faint with disgust at the prospect. He felt that he—some one—ought to warn her. But how? How to reveal to her Bynum's moral turpitude without casting reflections on the character of his late partner, her father? Old Shackleford had, innocently enough, allowed himself to become a party to one or two of Bynum's dirtiest deals—that the Street knew of.

But in that transient moment, while Reverdy's brain reeled in the clash of these considerations, one truth stood out clear and brilliant to his understanding: that his boasted cure for his heart's sickness was no cure; that his life was then, as ever, in the hollow of this woman's hand; that her welfare was to him more than his soul's salvation; that, in a word, he loved her.

And he looked boldly into her eyes, seeing therein the ineradicable marks of anxiety, of sorrow and of suffering. He guessed that even then she might be wakening to a suspicion of Bynum's baseness; and Reverdy's sole thought was concerning the way by which he might aid her, rescue her fortune—if Bynum had left her a shred of that.

"I didn't know it," he confessed, quickly. "But I'm glad to hear it. The new firm prospers, I trust? Possibly

I may be able to throw a little business in your way."

"Why," she began, formulating a courteous refusal, "I'm sure you are very kind, Mr. Reverdy, but——"

But the elevator was on Reverdy's side, that morning. In the middle of her sentence it slid sedately to the bottom of the shaft and the starter opened the gates to release them. They stepped out and into another car, Reverdy tactfully changing the subject; so that she was unable to conclude her declination.

During the brief ascent Reverdy talked—talked feverishly. Later he found himself unable to recall just precisely what he did say before they parted on the seventh floor; but the memory of an amused smile that had lurked in the corners of her mouth lingered with the man—and maddened him.

"I suppose I made a damned ass of myself!" he groaned, when he had run the gantlet of the yellow-haired stenographer's fine, rolling eyes, and the office boy's beady, inquisitive stare, and was at length alone in his private office.

He glowered moodily across the air shaft.

"I'll have to move to another building," he concluded; "I can't stand this!"

The girl was at her desk, talking with Bynum. Bynum was leaning over her with exaggerated deference. A fine figure of a man he was—Bynum—a man to fill a woman's eye, Reverdy fancied, for all his smooth, oily ways. In his manner, in his sleek courtesy, there was an adoration which Reverdy interpreted as half mocking, but which might well turn the head of a woman. A pang of wild jealousy rent the heart of Young Reverdy; and he shook a furtive fist at the self-satisfied Bynum.

"Poor girl!" he said aloud. "Of course she doesn't imagine——!" He pulled his desk chair savagely out of her radius of vision and plumped himself into it, burying his hot face in his hands. "Ah, Helen, Helen!" cried Young Reverdy.

Thus glooming, Gallinger found him an hour later; and before Gallinger could open his mouth, Reverdy had snapped a question at him.

"What's Bynum up to now, Gallinger? Still at the old dodges?"

Gallinger sat down, astonished at the abruptness of the query, but alive as to what brought it forth.

"Oh, about the same," he said. "Everyone in the Street knows to a moral certainty that Bynum pockets half the money his customers give him, but you can't fasten it on the fellow."

"Thank you," Reverdy muttered, glumly. He looked at his watch; ten o'clock. Bynum was due on the Exchange floor at that minute; Helen would be alone. Reverdy took a sudden resolution, without troubling to vouchsafe an explanation to Gallinger.

"You stay here for a few minutes, will you?" he asked. "I'll be back before long. Just a minute——"

This time he did not falter, but rather with rapid, nervous strides made his way around the building, into the southern corridor. His mind was in a turmoil, he had no coherent idea of what he was about to do; one thing only was patent to him—that, since Bynum was still threading the devious, shady by-paths of speculation, Helen must be warned in order that she might withdraw from association with her partner and save her name from the ignominy of the ultimate exposure that comes inevitably to men of Bynum's stamp.

Reverdy was heedless as to the manner in which he was to convey this warning to Helen; or how it was likely to be received. He only knew that it must be done, and that instantly. And he burst quite recklessly through the swinging doors of Bynum & Shackleford's customers' room, full of his purpose and regardless of all else.

At first he did not see her. A rapid glance about the place showed him merely the familiar earmarks of the second-class broker's office; the shabby appointments and shabbier clerking force, the half-dozen still more shabby, haggard and anxious-looking clients who sat uneasily before the quotation board, their eyes glued upon this, the unfailing thermometer of their fortunes. That Helen should live and have her daily being in such an atmosphere as

this—the knowledge was unbearable to Reverdy.

In a moment he caught a glimpse of her as she sat in the firm's private room, her ear to the telephone receiver. So far she had not become aware of his arrival. But now as he started toward the door, she looked up, saw him, and nodded with a little smile. Reverdy waited on the threshold until she spoke a final low word into the transmitter and hung the receiver on its hook.

Then, "Can I come in?" he asked.

"Why, certainly, Mr. Reverdy. What can I do for you?"

She was determined that, since he insisted upon a continuance of their acquaintanceship, they should at least meet upon common ground, as man of business with woman of affairs. But as she rose and gave him her hand, frankly and with no hesitation, the ardent pressure which he was unable to refrain from giving her fingers brought a startled appeal to her eyes, and a slow, dull color burned in her cheeks.

"What can I do for you?" she persisted, more brusquely.

It brought him to his senses. To be sure, what plausible excuse had he to offer for the intrusion? "Why—why——" He hesitated. And then, with a rush of thankfulness, he remembered his remark about throwing a little business in the way of Bynum and Shackleford, and became more composed.

He took the chair at the corner of her desk.

"I want you to buy me some Erie," he said.

"Certainly." Miss Shackleford reached for a memorandum pad; she was all business now, and the crimson was gone from her cheeks.

"How much?"

"Five thousand shares," he told her.

It was a large order for Bynum & Shackleford to handle. Her start of surprise told him that.

"At what price?" she asked, hoping that he had not noticed.

"At the market."

"On margin?"

"Certainly."

"How many points? Three or five?"

It was her first misstep. Deep in the woman's heart was the desire to prove to this man that she was no novice—as she really was—in the ways of the Street; she had made use of the technical jargon with a large but misplaced self-confidence.

But this she did not know—that a reputable house does not accept commissions on less than a ten-point margin. Reverdy made a mental note of her inadvertent *exposé* of Bynum's methods, and replied quietly:

"Better make it ten points. I'll send over my check at once."

"Thank you." She pushed the pad toward him, offering her pencil for his signature to the buying order.

"You'll keep this between ourselves, of course," he said. "I don't mind telling you that there is going to be a bull movement in Erie—about twenty points."

"Why, that is very kind—"

"I'd advise you—if you'll permit me—to get aboard."

"Thank you, Mr. Reverdy, but—but—well, to be frank with you, I am unable to accept the tip." She considered a moment, biting her tongue to keep back the words. But still she wished to show him her mastery of the intricacies of speculation. "I'm pretty well tied up in Ontario Preferred," she volunteered. "We are looking for a ten-point advance."

"Oh!"

Reverdy's tone spoke volumes. In that one brief sentence she had revealed to his trained intelligence the depths of Bynum's duplicity—had assured him of the correctness of his suspicions. Ontario—why, it was dead, so far as legitimate speculation was concerned; the issuing company was practically bankrupt, and the Street knew it; the security was a drug on the market—going begging around thirty. So that was what Bynum had drawn her slight fortunes into! Reverdy thanked the providence that had brought him upon the boards in time to avert this financial ruin that hung menacingly over the head of the woman he loved.

For no longer did the man attempt to deny that he still loved her.

"You disapprove?" she would know, rightly interpreting his exclamation.

"Well—er—Bynum advised you, I suppose?"

"Yes," she nodded.

He took his fate in his hands. No matter what was to happen, this thing was not to go further, if word or deed of Reverdy's could avail to stop it.

He leaned toward her, speaking guardedly, though they were practically alone.

"If you'll take my advice, Miss Shackleford, you'll sell your holding of Ontario Preferred at whatever price you can get. Bynum—" He paused, pondering: to what motive would she ascribe what he was about to say to her?

But the girl only smiled upon him, encouragingly. Reverdy's name was a power in the Street; surely he would know of what he spoke. "Bynum—" she led him on.

Reverdy plunged despairingly into the heart of the black business.

"He—well, you should know it—I suppose no one had informed you—you didn't suspect, of course—"

"What, what do you—?" she interrupted.

"Bynum," he said, quickly. "He's a—a blackleg. Honestly, Helen, you should not be associated with the fellow. It isn't your fault, you know, but the man's not—not honest. If he advised you to buy Ontario heavily—I gather that you are deeply involved—he did it with his own interests in mind. You'll lose, as sure as the sun will set this night. But Bynum—he'll win."

There was sincerity and conviction in the man's voice. Against her inclination she listened, and for the moment she believed him. And then, as she sat considering him with level, grave eyes, he saw a cloud gathering in their fathomless depths.

Reverdy drew a long breath and sat back. He apprehended what was coming. She had put the wrong construction to his motive and—and it came.



"Thank you, Mr. Reverdy," she said frigidly. "I am sorry that I may not take your advice. I—really—I hardly think you are quite disinterested."

He rose.

"Meaning—?" he prompted, curtly.

"Meaning that you wish to poison my mind against the man who has been like a father to me since—since Daddy——" She almost broke down, the man's heart fairly bled for her; but her words were merciless. "You are not acting honorably. I would not have thought it of you, Mr. Reverdy. You—you are——"

"Thank you," he interrupted, his eyes blazing. "You need say no more."

"I think not," she concurred, amiably.

"Naturally, after this we cannot handle your commission, Mr. Reverdy. Good-day." She took the buying order he had just signed and shredded it with her white, slender fingers. The fragments fluttered to the floor.

Reverdy turned to go, waited a brief moment, irresolute, hoping she would relent. He was very angry, but beneath that emotion, deep down in the soul of him he knew that he could bear with her disdain if only she would listen to reason. With him it was her welfare before all.

"Helen!" he began, well-nigh frantic, just as the telephone bell rang.

She whirled around in her chair to answer it. "Good-day," she repeated.

And he went out—with tears of chagrin in his eyes and his temples throbbing like mad. To think that he should love her so, and that she should be so blind, so unjust!

But your Wall Street man has early learned the lesson of self-control. Reverdy's hand was firm on the throttle of his temper, and before he had come to his own door his mind was as firmly made up. Helen Shackleford might be blind and unjust, but Clifford Reverdy was not going to stand by and see her suffer for it—if he could help it.

And he thought he could.

"Gallinger," he greeted that impatient broker, "have you a new clerk in your office—some one about as green as a salad?"

"Wha-at?" Gallinger was astounded.

"What the devil are you driving at, Cliff?"

"I say"—impatiently—"have you a youngster in your office that the Street doesn't know for your man?"

Gallinger subdued his surprise, considered, mentally reviewing his office force, and announced:

"Well, there's little Walcott."

"He'll do." Reverdy sat down at his desk and scribbled a check, which he handed his confidential broker.

"You get that cashed and give the money to Walcott. Have him go to Bynum & Shackleford's to-day—the sooner the better—and buy one hundred shares of Ontario Preferred on a five-point margin, for his own account. Don't let him use my name or yours."

"But," expostulated Gallinger, "he'll have to be introduced in order to open an account."

"Not with Bynum & Shackleford, Gallinger. Did you hear me say 'five-point margin'? With a firm that'll take a five-point margin, ready cash will prove the best introduction in the world. You understand? Send Walcott there at once."

"Well, all right," Gallinger agreed dubiously. "But it seems to me you might tell a chap what you're driving at."

"I'm driving at Bynum," Reverdy announced grimly. "And I'm going to drive him out of the Street. Look here."

He sat down and talked seriously with Gallinger for the matter of ten minutes or so.

Gallinger left Reverdy's office wearing a large, cherubic smile.

Reverdy's instructions were implicitly obeyed. In the two succeeding days three things came under Gallinger's notice, and interested him considerably.

On the first day, when he made his usual matutinal call upon his principal, he found that Reverdy's desk had been shifted from its former position by the window. From where he now sat Young Reverdy could neither see nor be seen from the suite of offices on the opposite side of the well.

Gallinger took occasion to walk over to the window of Reverdy's office. He

whistled softly when he observed that Bynum & Shackelford's windows were fitted with large, green wire-netting screens, effectually providing against outside observation of whatever went on within the bucket-shop.

Gallinger's whistle being ignored by Reverdy, Gallinger made no further comment.

The third happening was of a more general speculative interest; Ontario Preferred, which was quoted at twenty-nine at the opening of the first day's trading, dropped quietly and unostentatiously from that point to twenty-five at noon of the second day, where it rested upon half-hearted support.

At one o'clock Reverdy in his office received a telephone message from Gallinger on the floor of the Exchange.

"Bynum has left the floor," Gallinger reported.

Reverdy smiled mysteriously into the transmitter.

"Get Walcott and come right up, quick's you can," he told Gallinger.

Still smiling inscrutably, he crossed to the window and stood with his elbow on the corner of the desk, puffing meditatively at a cigar, his gaze fixed upon the new green wire-netting screen across the air shaft; through it, dimly and vaguely, he could see a white blur that to him stood for Helen Shackelford's shirt-waist. Young Reverdy shook his head at it, with a sober air.

"Sweetheart, sweetheart!" he said softly. "I am sorry. I rather fancy you're having a bad quarter of an hour behind that screen. I've done my best, Helen, but I couldn't spare you that, dear. That wasn't my fault, you know."

He whirled around, guiltily, as the handle of the door rattled. His pensive mood was gone on the instant.

"Howdy, Gallinger!" he cried, heartily. "Come right in. This is Mr. Walcott, I presume? I'm glad to meet you."

Young Reverdy's hand closed over the fingers of a little, dark, intelligent-eyed man who had followed Gallinger into the room, and who looked for the first time and with obvious reverence upon the great manipulator.

"Thank you, Mr. Reverdy, sir," he stammered, in an ecstasy of confusion.

"You're ready?" Reverdy questioned Gallinger with his eyes, receiving an affirmative nod in reply. "You know what you are to do, I presume, Mr. Walcott?"

"Yes, sir; Mr. Gallinger has been telling me just what I'm to say."

"Good. You go ahead, then. Gallinger and I will follow."

In such order, two minutes later, they entered the customers' room of the firm of Bynum & Shackelford.

Reverdy was at once impressed with the conviction that he had timed this visit with extreme nicety. "It works out like a neat little puzzle, once you have hold of the right clew," he said exultantly to himself, embracing the room with an all-observing eye.

It was almost empty of clients; there were but one or two loiterers in the cushioned armchairs before the big quotation board; and even they seemed hardly at ease. The few clerks were gathered in a whispering group behind the cashier's grating, their eyes turned toward the closed door of the firm's private office. An atmosphere infected with unrest, uncertainty, distrust seemed to pervade the place, in which the gossip of the ticker sounded uncannily high and clear.

Gallinger turned to Reverdy.

"You were right, all right," he commented.

Reverdy merely smiled. "Hush!" he added.

Walcott had crossed to the cashier's window.

"Mr. Bynum?" he inquired of one of the clerks. A jerk of the thumb toward the closed door was his answer. He looked to Gallinger for support.

"Go on—knock," said Gallinger.

Walcott knocked. A guarded, intense murmur of conversation within ceased abruptly.

"What?" some one cried out from behind the partition. "Who's that? What d'ye want?"

"That's Bynum," said Gallinger to Reverdy.

Walcott raised his hand to knock

again, without replying, but before his knuckles touched the panels of the door it was opened from within, and Bynum looked out angrily.

"What the devil do you want?" he stormed angrily. "I gave orders——"

"Want to see you," put in Walcott, cheerfully. "Hold on! Won't detain you a minute."

Bynum recognized him at last.

"Oh, Mr. Walcott," he exclaimed in his most soothing manner. "If you'll excuse me, just a second——"

"How about my Ontario?" interrupted Walcott.

"Why—er—I regret—the fall in the price obliged me to sell you out, not half an hour ago. If you had only been here to put up more margin——"

"Too thin," commented Gallinger, audibly.

Bynum looked quickly toward the speaker. He saw Reverdy also, and a puzzled expression crossed his handsome face.

"What does this mean, Mr. Walcott?" he inquired, querulously.

Walcott quietly inserted his foot behind the half-open door and the jamb.

"Want to talk to you," he replied, tersely. "Better let us in, so that we won't be overheard."

Bynum attempted to close the door.

"But I don't understand——" he began.

At that moment Helen Shackleford's face showed over his shoulder. Reverdy caught at his breath—a little, pained gasp. "Ah, sweetheart, sweetheart!" he whispered. "Don't! It isn't worth while, you know." For she had been crying; there were traces of dampness on her flushed cheeks, her eyes, like a sea newly storm-swept, were unnaturally bright, and about them were little, dark circles that told Reverdy without equivocation of a sleepless night. Even so she was wonderfully lovely, to his mind.

He wanted very earnestly to comfort her; so he had to dig his nails into his palms in order to appear composed. But even that aid to self-control failed him when he heard her voice.

"Oh, Clifford!" she cried, impulsively. "I am so glad!"

And with that singing in his heart, there was no holding Young Reverdy. He was on the threshold in two steps, pushing little Walcott before him.

"Let me in, sir!" he told Bynum, sternly.

Nonplused, Bynum gave way; for the moment his wits deserted him, and in that moment Gallinger also had entered and put his shoulders to the door. Then Bynum began to have an inkling of what was in the wind.

"By what right," he blustered furiously at Reverdy, "do you intrude?"

Reverdy's astonished stare was very convincing.

"Why," he said, ingenuously, "Miss Shackleford wished to see me, so I just came in." But promptly he dropped his bantering tone.

"We came to see you, primarily, about Mr. Walcott's Ontario, Bynum," he said, coldly. "Mr. Walcott wants his money back."

Bynum sneered. "Oh, he does!" he snarled. "Well, I don't know by what right——"

"Oh, yes, you do. You say you sold him out at twenty-five, I believe. Well, now, to whom did you sell Walcott's one hundred shares of Ontario?"

Bynum started toward the door. "None of your infernal business!" he cried. "I refuse to submit to this inquisition."

Gallinger's broad shoulders, however, were firm against the panels. "I wouldn't refuse," he put in. "If a customer demands the name of the broker on the other side of the transaction, you're bound to give it, you know. Now, who——?"

"Belden & Tausig."

"That's a lie," said Reverdy, shortly. "You haven't turned a share of Ontario on the floor in the last two weeks, and you know it, Bynum. You've pocketed Walcott's money, here, just as you are trying to pocket Miss Shackleford's. I can prove what I say by your clearing-house sheets, and you don't dare deny it. Come now, you may as well own up and take your medicine, if you don't want to get into worse trouble."

Reverdy turned to the girl at his side.

"How much did he induce you to put into the Ontario deal, Helen?" he asked.

"Fifty thousand dollars, all told," she faltered. "He had just informed me that we are both wiped out—insolvent. Of course, I believed him, but—but, Clifford, are you sure—*sure*?"

"Bynum's sure," he laughed. "Aren't you, Bynum? Come! What have you done with the money? It's deposited to your account somewhere, we know. Where?"

The man scowled from one face to the other, pondering escape. Presently, with a gesture of disgust, he gave it up. He was fairly trapped, at last; there was no way out of it, and he was very well aware of the fact.

"What are you going to do with me?" he counter-questioned.

"Nothing, provided you make restitution," Reverdy assured him pleasantly. "You draw two checks, one for fifty thousand and one for five hundred, respectively, to Miss Shackelford's and Walcott's orders, and you can do what you please with yourself—after we have had the checks certified, of course."

For a little while there was a strained silence in the office. Bynum's eyes, which at first had glared defiance into Reverdy's, fell before the other's unmoved, unrelenting regard.

"Oh, well—!" he snapped at length. "I agree."

He sat down at the desk, taking a check book from his pocket, and jabbing the pen viciously into the inkstand. Gallinger's plump sides shook with silent merriment.

"Miss Shackelford and I," Reverdy proclaimed, with a beaming confidence that proved to be justified, "will have the checks certified, Gallinger. If they are all right, we'll phone you, and you can let Mr. Bynum go about his business. Helen"—unconsciously his tone softened—"I've a cab waiting. You'll come with me, of course?"

By way of answer, she looked at him—a passing glance, hardly caught ere a memory, that nevertheless served to set Reverdy's blood bounding in his

veins. And she reached blindly for her hat.

Reverdy dashed out of the bank, beaming a large satisfaction at the whole wide world.

"It's all right—certified," he almost shouted at the girl. She nestled back against the cushions with a little, halting sigh. Reverdy gave the cabman her address and climbed in.

A moment later the vehicle turned into Broadway, to win a way uptown. It progressed by fits and starts, irresolutely, hemmed in on all sides by trucks, surface cars, coupés and push-carts; the cab became a moving atom in the mighty stream of north-bound traffic. Around it the life of the street whirled with a crash and clangor indescribable.

But in the hearts of these two there was contentment, and peace infinite; they were as though quite alone, unregarded by any of mankind, in the midst of a howling wilderness.

At first she had drawn a little away from him, half fearfully, glancing at him from under her up-curved lashes. But Reverdy did not attempt to force the issue. Though his life's happiness hung in the balance, still he thought he knew—

"I—I don't know how I am to thank you, Clif—Clifford," he heard her say.

"I haven't asked for thanks," he returned. "I believe it's hardly necessary for me to state what I would ask."

"N-no," she breathed.

He saw her hand stealing timidly across the cushion toward his own. In an instant he was very happy. After a long pause, "But why did you send me away?" he would know, imperatively.

He could feel her trembling in the pressure of her fingers. "It—it was all a mistake, dear," she said at length. "I did not know, until you were gone, how much I lo—"

"Hush!" he cried, gravely. "Not now, not here, sweetheart," he pleaded. "Why, don't you know that all the world's on tiptoe, holding its breath to hear you say just that?"

# BRUTE FORCE

By Jane Maurice



HE clock again struck the hour.

Valentine, who had been lying very still in her desperate battle against sleeplessness, opened her eyes and acknowledged her defeat.

And with the conviction that the healing balm to brain and nerves was again denied her, came a sort of terror and despair at the thought of the next day's work which suddenly seemed impossible.

She got up and lit the gas, staring a moment curiously at the pale face and fair, disordered hair which the mirror reflected back at her. Then, at her desk, she wrote the note which, stamped and directed, met her eyes as she dressed the next morning.

Only a tiny span of sleep was necessary to steady her nerves and renew her energies for the morning, but its refreshment failed her long before the day ended and her spirits drooped into an almost despairing depression when she remembered a promise she had given her sister the day before, a promise to fill a place at dinner that evening.

"Although after all it may refresh me, and at least it can't make me any more tired," she reflected as she entered her cab for the long, silent drive up the avenue.

Physical exhaustion, however, may reach such a point that even pleasant sensations become painful, and as Valentine sat down to dinner beside her little brother-in-law near the foot of a long table, she felt nothing but a sort of impatient repulsion from everything about her. But she ate what was set before her because her bodily weariness re-

quired refreshment, and after a few moments she was able to spur her flagging energies on to meet the obligations of her place at dinner.

"I have put you next to Tony Black," her sister Julia had said to her a few moments before, in the drawing room. "Do be nice to him, and tell me what you think of him."

She was too much a New Yorker not to know the significance and insignificance of the name her sister had just whispered to her.

Tony Black was, first of all, the nephew of a member of one of the most conservative firms in Wall Street and had begun life in the insignificance of a clerkship in his uncle's office. But lately he had emerged from unimportance, not by natural sequence, as a junior partner of Black, Brown & Co., but as one of the most active participants in the more speculative and daring movements of the stock market. And now people, who had at first prophesied speedy ruin and disaster followed by a humble return to the paths in which he had been brought up, seeing him so often on the right side, were beginning to hint at unusual ability, originality, foresight. It was even whispered that he had been the guiding spirit in the pool whose successful outcome had brought consternation to outsiders and golden harvest to its members earlier in the year.

But Valentine, as she turned to him, would have been glad to see a little of this potential greatness exchanged for some of those slighter, more amiable qualities which make a man a pleasant companion. There was at first sight something baffling, blank and inexpress-

sive about his whole personality which made her feel he was going to be hard to talk to.

He had a clean-shaven, rather heavy face, a round compact head covered by very smooth, thick, dark hair parted exactly in the middle, a countenance at once boyish and wooden, a metallic voice, a perfunctory manner. His eyes were very dark, of a strangely opaque, unluminous quality, and though well shaded by a heavy brow, they gave the appearance of being somewhat prominent in their setting.

These eyes he now bent upon her with a sort of fictitious attention while she was speaking, but he had a way of replying as if he were a little deaf and had only partly understood what she said; and when he spoke himself it was with a rapid, monotonous fluency on subjects taken quite at random, unconnected with each other or her, which she found increasingly difficult to follow or reply to.

She was glad when dinner was over—glad to follow her sister and the other women into the cool drawing room, to sit silent among the soft cushions of a tiny divan without the necessity of further efforts for anyone's entertainment. When the men came back from the dining room, she was preparing to make her escape, only balked for the moment by the fortuitous position of a large chair, when she saw Tony Black appear in the doorway. He hesitated a moment and then came over and stood beside her. It was like a small red seal of success and acceptance at the end of a long arid document of failure.

"Shall I see you at the opera to-morrow night?" he asked, and the metallic harshness of his voice was somewhat softened.

"I am afraid not," she answered, smiling. "I go out very little."

"Frivolity and waste of time?"

She laughed.

"Oh, no—I find it most amusing when I can go, but I work very hard all day, and I am usually too tired to play hard in the evening."

"You write, I suppose," he remarked,

his eyes still fixed upon her with expressionless intentness.

"Write! Why do you suppose I write?"

"Isn't that what women do when they work?"

"Not if they want to make a great deal of money."

"Oh! How else can a woman make money—" he said, with a sort of indulgent courtesy, "a great deal of money. I should like to know?"

"The way you do," she replied, audaciously. "It is all a matter of market."

A flash of amusement came into his dull eyes.

"What is your market?" he asked, half laughing.

"My market is parents, and my products educational."

"Oh," he said, "a school!" And he looked at her again with the interest of a faint surprise.

"Don't say that," she cried, impulsively. "It sounds so dull. My work is not dull. It means organization and combination and competition and all those interesting things that you like to do—only on a small scale; and I do it chiefly and particularly to make money."

He laughed. She felt that she was amusing him.

"And you really work very hard—as hard as a man?" he asked with a kind of friendly curiosity.

She looked up at him, smiling with a little half contemptuous shrug.

"Not as hard as a man, but hard enough. Just now I am rather worn out, and am going down to Lakewood on Friday to sleep for three days."

"That is the thing to do," he said, laughing. "My uncle is there now for the very same reason."

They parted quite good friends and when Valentine thought of him again it was complacently, as when one remembers having made a good impression.

A lasting impression she perceived when she met him again and found he had not forgotten her.

"Aren't you going to invite me to come to see you?" he asked then. "I



know your brother and sister very well, and I see your father often at the club. Why can't I know more of you, too?"

"No, don't come," she said frankly. "You won't find it amusing. I am usually too tired and too stupid to be in the least agreeable to anyone in the evening, and I am busy all day."

"I don't want to be amused," he said very seriously, but she only laughed and assured him that she knew what he wanted better than he did.

"Then why don't you let me come and amuse you?"

"Oh, I have no time to be amused."

"No matter how busy one is, one must take some relaxation."

"But I don't want relaxation, and I am amused in my own way, both amused and interested by my own work—which takes so much out of me that I have nothing left."

"Not even for friendship?"

"Not for new friendship."

"And do you mean to say you are satisfied with such a dry, loveless existence?" he asked in high disgust and disapproval.

"I don't see why you assume it is loveless because I don't—"

"Because I don't love *you*" was the obvious conclusion, but she left it unmade, and the faint shadow of sauciness which had come into her eyes as she began to speak, died almost immediately into her usual very sweet, but somewhat impersonal, smile.

But he did come in spite of the want of cordiality in her permission, and continued to come, though he often found her listless, and, as she herself would have said, stupid from the fatigue of her day's work. Perhaps he was the less repelled by the almost passive gentleness which was often all she had to receive him with, because he had been attracted to her in the first place less by her lively or entertaining qualities than by a certain sweetness in the expression of her brow and eyes, a very soft, thrilling note in some of the tones of her voice. After all, little things like that are often the strongest reasons a man can give himself for falling in love with a woman.

And perhaps it was the new birth of love in his heart, of which he was still half unconscious, which loosened his tongue beyond his usual habits of reticence and made him like to talk so much and so freely about his own affairs at her invitation. He had lived for several years in Chicago, representing his uncle's firm there. He told her a little about his first experiences in the Chicago money market, his earliest experiments in speculation, some of his risks, one or two of his successes.

She was struck by the mixture of simplicity, sagacity and brutality by which he had carried out many of his plans and attained most of his ends. All the finer scruples which lie the other side of mere business honesty seemed utterly unknown to him. He seemed to consider weakness merely a hole through which he might break more easily, ignorance a thing to be exploited, the generosity of an opponent a thing to be taken advantage of.

In her own very real struggle after material existence and success, Valentine had always used an almost fancifully high standard of honor and generous dealing, but she was not proud of it, for there was always a haunting sense in the back of her mind that such a standard was, after all, a necessity in the survival of the weak in the struggle. And was not she herself one of the weak? Even now was she not feeling the hopeless handicap of physical weariness which came from the inadequacy of her strength to the use she was making of it?

But Tony was not so handicapped, and she admired his ruthlessness, even while she shrank from it, as an evidence of his unflawed capacity and adequacy of pure animal strength. And she was growing to have an almost superstitious belief in his final success even in the most hazardous undertaking, when suddenly reports began to come uptown of difficulties and dangers in the Street which seemed to involve and threaten this very invincible supremacy. She put them away at first as not worthy of belief. But as the days passed by and Tony did not appear to refute the ru-

mors, while at the same time reports became more authoritative and convincing that it was indeed he who was meant by the young speculator that had been caught short when the market went up, she began to feel the pangs of a very real and keen anxiety. And it was Tony that the papers meant. For the last few days especially, he had been living in the very shadow of approaching disaster. He had remained late one evening at his office with a man—one of the firm who was supposed to be directing the movement which was destroying him. Tony had talked for hours, fluently, persuasively, at great length. At the end the other man was white and flaccid with exhaustion, but Black looked as fresh as when he began. The result, however, was still in doubt when they separated, and on that result hung everything.

The night was hot and windless. Half mechanically he began to follow the long canyon of Broadway uptown, letting car after car pass by him till he found himself at last opposite Grace Church. Then he turned aimlessly into Fifth Avenue, walking more slowly as a faint breath of the west wind blew to him out of the side streets. Everything was very still and deserted in the lower town, though it was not much after 10 P. M. A row of noisy bicyclists sped by, racing up the avenue. Two automobiles thundered past side by side, their red eyes glaring warningly, and vanished into space. A tall gentleman came strolling from the darkness of the churchyard at Twelfth Street followed by a Scotch terrier. He greeted Black pleasantly as he came by and Black recognized him as Valentine's father.

"Hot night!"

"Yes, very hot."

They stopped and talked for a few minutes in desultory fashion.

"Come in and have a drink," said Mr. March, hospitably, and Tony followed, nothing loath, as he led the way down the side street till he stopped at the low steps of his own house.

The windows were all open because of the heat; the white curtains swaying

to and fro in the slight breeze, gave glimpses of a dimly lit interior.

"Valentine must be in the back room," said her father.

Valentine! Tony realized all at once that the one object he had in his mind from the time he left his office, and to which he had been tending, had been attained at last.

She appeared from the inner room at her father's call.

"I have brought Mr. Black in to have a drink," said Mr. March. "A whisky and soda is the best thing I know for sleeplessness." And he led them both back to the dining room where the dim light and the windows, open to the ground, gave some promise of coolness. Outside was a little piazza covered with climbing plants, late wistaria. Beyond glimmered a grassy yard and a few tall shrubs hung with pale white flowers.

Tony sank down into a wide, cool leather chair by the window, and watched Valentine fill a tall glass with ice and bring a seltzer bottle from the sideboard.

There were traces on the table that Mr. March had already satisfied his cravings before his guest met him. He now strolled out into the yard and began to walk up and down the narrow flagging outside the window, smoking and talking to his little dog.

Tony poured out his whisky and seltzer for himself and drank it thirstily. Then he sat down again in his seat by the window.

Valentine turned one of the dining-room chairs from its place beside the table and sat on it sideways, leaning her elbows on the slippery wooden surface in front of her while she looked across at him with eyes full of friendly interest.

Her keen glance took note of the ravages the events of the past month had made on him, well hidden as they were under his impassive exterior. She saw how pale he was, what deep lines had been plowed in his smooth-shaven cheeks, under his heavy eyes. A sudden wave of tenderness, of sympathy for him rose in her heart. It seemed to her that she knew exactly what he was

feeling, and she was eager to comfort him by giving him all the human things she herself had wanted in certain bitter moments of her past when no one gave her anything.

He did not know why she spoke to him so gently, why the very tones of her voice came to him as a refreshment, though she was only telling him about the lilac in full bloom outside and asking him to notice its fragrance. It was the lilac, then, that was filling the room with perfume.

"You are tired. I have never seen you tired before. You must be under a very great strain. I hope it won't last much longer."

"It ought not to last much longer. It can't, now," he said. The old struggle which had stopped for a minute began again in his mind.

"You always come out right in the end, I believe," she said, smiling.

"I don't know. I hope so," he replied shortly, with a restless sigh.

He raised his heavy eyes slowly and found her looking at him. The infinite gentleness in her expression made him catch his breath with sudden strange emotion.

"Suppose I fail this time! Would you care?" he asked suddenly, and was vaguely bewildered when she ignored the personal question as she answered:

"Well, suppose you do. You are very strong. There is a great deal more life left in you to succeed with."

He was silent—balked—he hardly knew how or of what. She went on earnestly.

"Perhaps it is womanish to prepare to meet failure before it comes, but it is a help sometimes. Once I had to risk something. It was a very little thing. You would have laughed that I thought it a risk at all, but it was a matter of life or death to me. It was about—about my school." She gave a little, deprecating laugh. "There were weeks before I could be sure—I haven't forgotten them. It makes me feel a little as if I understood."

"You are very good to me," he said, simply.

"Oh, no! I am very sorry." Her

voice was so soft that it sounded like a caress, a tender flattery to which he listened as in a dream. "You have always seemed so confident, so triumphant. I hate to see things going against you. It grieves me very much. Papa said something about your not sleeping. Do you sleep?"

He shook his head.

"Not lately. But I shall to-night, thanks to you."

He pulled himself together and rose up to take his leave.

"I hope you will sleep," she said again as he went away.

She did not sleep herself till nearly morning, but lay in a sort of agony of vicarious suffering, to which a broken line of half-forgotten verse lent itself as a refrain:

"I who am as a nerve along which creep  
The else unfelt oppressions of the world."

But young Black, in the airless darkness of his great room at home, let his mind dwell with delicious relief on the hour spent in the fragrance of the lilac tree. Here alone he could linger, rested and consoled by the echo of Valentine's voice, the memory of the flowerlike sweetness of her eyes. When he fell asleep, dreams added their airy fabric to reality. He dreamed that she had kissed him, and when he woke he seemed still to feel the touch of her soft, cool cheek against his. The memory of that kiss went with him through that day and many days to come. In his fancy she was always waiting for him, waiting for him to come and tell her of the strange new thing he had found in his heart for her.

He was right in thinking they had been very near to one another when she gave him of her very best to help him in his time of trouble. And he was right in believing that her sympathy with him had been real even to the point of personal suffering. But he never understood—how could he?—how all this free gift of tender interest could be there for him when he needed it, and she yet remain aloof without the least thought of self-surrender.

As soon as he could turn his attention from the confusion in the Street—whence, after all, amid much loss and ruin, he emerged safe, and with the added distinction of another victory—he went to see her. She was out. He came the next day.

She was in her little office at her school, working against time to finish an accumulation of business which was keeping her uptown, when to her great surprise Tony appeared in the doorway. Her first sensation was of annoyance and resentment at any interruption. Her nerves, strained up to their especial and allotted task for the afternoon, began to jangle at the shock of new demands upon them, and it was all she could do to hold them in check and speak to Tony politely.

"I am afraid I am interrupting you," he said, apologetically.

"I am very busy," she replied with an effort at graciousness. "You see, no one ever comes here except on business, and I am not used to it."

"Well, we'll call it business then," he said with an embarrassed laugh, and stammered very much at first as he tried to make clear his best excuse for coming. She was taken so entirely unaware that it was some time before she understood what he meant.

Then at first she was filled by nothing so much as an absurd humiliation and alarm lest her sister or any one of her wise women friends, who often prophesied her confusion, should know how guilelessly she had been betrayed into listening to what she did not wish to hear—what she would certainly have tried to prevent if she had had the slightest suspicion, the slightest premonition that it was to this point her friendship with Tony was tending.

But she hadn't thought, she hadn't considered, and now she had to sit unprepared and wordless like a silly girl of eighteen, while he poured out the torrent of his eloquence upon her.

She had to see the simple, manly confidence of his manner change to confusion and distress, when she at last recovered from the first shock of surprise enough to begin some lame explanation

of her own misunderstanding. She had to see him more deeply moved as she became more convincing.

The sight of the pain she was inflicting made her flinch and shiver. She had forgotten what it was like, or perhaps she had never known before; perhaps she had not cared as much in those days, years ago, when she had suffered too, yet had never seemed to shrink from inflicting deep, unnecessary wounds in a heart that loved her.

She cared very much now. She would have given anything to be able to comfort him.

"I do like you very much. I have always liked and admired you ever since I knew you. Yes. Perhaps I could even love you if I had time to fall in love with anyone. But my work absorbs me. You ought to know what power things like that have to absorb one's life."

She sat breathless and exhausted when he left her, still thrilling all over at the memory of his shaken countenance, the touch of his lips on her hand, his broken, stammering words of farewell.

Then the door opened with a long-delayed interruption and forced her back into the routine of daily life. She went on with her work, which demanded so much attention as to make reflection impossible. Yet there continued to go with her through all she was doing a feeling that something had happened, something so significant that it gave her a strange dual impression as if she were no longer alone.

But the school year was approaching its end and she was very busy. Her mind was absorbed in plans, involving some risk, which required all her attention. Again, as so often before, she was confronted by the handicapping limitations of physical weakness. To reach success in what she was attempting she needed all her scanty resources, all that she had of endurance in brain, nerve and muscle.

When she and Tony met again, as they did quite suddenly in her own street at the end of a very long and weary day in late June, she was as

startled and surprised as if she had never expected to see him again.

He looked so much as usual, however, that she recovered her equanimity, she hoped, before he noticed she had lost it, and spoke to him with more than her usual cordiality.

"You still in town! The papers, which seem to be chronicling your movements lately as if you were a prince, announced this morning that you were sailing in Northern waters with a dozen mighty money magnates, hatching new schemes to put the whole world in a trust."

"When you read the evening papers you will see that I arrived in New York from Boston at four this afternoon and leave by the *Etruria* on Saturday for a week in London. When do you go out of town?"

"To-morrow afternoon, thank Heaven, though there are mountains and seas of things to be done before I can arrive at that happy hour."

He strolled along down the street beside her, till they reached her front door, and then lingered on the steps, prolonging the moments by asking an interminable number of questions about her plans, present and future.

"Let me come in and see your father," he said at last, when there seemed nothing more to be asked or answered.

"No, he is away fishing in New Hampshire, and grandmother went off to Tuxedo this morning. I am all alone, or I should ask you to dinner."

"Oh, do come somewhere and dine with me!" said Tony impulsively, but he did not urge it when she refused, though he did not yet take his departure.

"Shall I ring the bell for you?"

"I have my latchkey."

"Let me open the door then."

She gave him her key, laughing a little at his insistent desire to make himself useful.

"Good-by," he said at last, looking at her almost solemnly with those hard, brown eyes of his. "You are very tired."

"I shall soon have time to rest," she

answered gratefully. "Good-by, I hope you will have a very pleasant summer."

She saw him leave her without regret, with distinct relief coming from a readjustment and recoil from what she now felt had been a burden of self-reproach throughout the last few days.

The next morning, filled as it was with endless, wearying details, was nevertheless a series of small successes. She saw the right people, she did with them what she wanted. She brought many things she had only hoped for to desired conclusions.

She lunched early and very lightly, and reached the station with only a few minutes to spare before the departure of the three o'clock local up the river. The cars were almost sickeningly hot. Valentine sighed as she took her seat in the Pullman and resigned herself to that last test of human endurance—a three hours' journey along the Hudson on a blazing afternoon in June.

As the train pulled out of the station a boy came through with a dispatch for her. She opened it wonderingly, and found it was from Julia.

"In town all day trying to catch you. Home to-night in Bob's new yacht now off shore near Fort Lee Ferry. Come aboard at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street. Never mind trunk. I can furnish you for the night. JULIA."

Valentine's spirits went up like a cork as she read. Oh, the good luck—the good luck which always attended her.

She passed triumphantly through the stifling odors of the tunnel, and when the domes of Columbia and the heights of Morningside rose to her view, she stepped out on the hot boards of the little station at One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street, and saw the long train go on without her, with a sense of exquisite relief.

One of her sister's grooms came up and touched his hat as she alighted, and conducted her to a cab which was standing at the gate in the street below. He gave the order, "Fort Lee Ferry," as he sprang up beside the coachman, who straightway sent his horse off at a good

pace down one of the interminable, ill-built streets of the upper city. The region was almost unknown to Valentine, and the drive seemed endless before the horse's hoofs resounded on the wooden flooring of the ferry landing. The servant opened the carriage door and conducted her along a covered way, down a flight of wooden steps, at whose foot a jaunty naphtha launch was bobbing in the water.

"The boat is out there in the stream, madam," he said, respectfully, pointing across the water to a slender white steamer which was swinging in the tide. He touched his hat again as he asked for her trunk checks and then went back to the cab, which drove away into the hot city again as the little launch began to snort and puff its way out of the landing slip into the glaring, dazzling whiteness of the hot waterway.

In a very few moments they had reached the yacht's side. The captain seemed a bluff, pleasant person.

"Mr. and Mrs. Counter are not yet aboard, miss. Would you like to go to your room? It is fresher below, out of the sun."

Valentine was glad to leave the glare of the deck for the comparative coolness of the cabin, where she could sit down and take off her hat and push her hair back from her forehead. It was all very pleasant and luxurious. A moment after the steward entered with a cool drink—Rhine wine and apollinaris. It was like Julia to remember the details of her little preferences. She drank slowly, enjoying the coolness of the ice which rose like dew against her hot cheeks and lips.

Then she sank back on the sofa, leaned her head against the pillows and half closed her eyes again till she felt herself falling, falling into a sort of bottomless gulf of delicious languor. Once or twice she tried to rouse herself, to look about her, and watch for Julia's arrival, but nothing in the world seemed so deeply desirable as the sleep which gradually overcame her, and soon she had sunk utterly into deepest unconsciousness. Valentine slept, very deeply, till she was suddenly awakened by a

noise like the clatter of a lock turned carelessly in some one's hand.

Her consciousness came back slowly and in great confusion, and for a moment she thought she was in bed at home in the deserted house in New York. But soon something unaccustomed in the spaces and fullnesses around her convinced her of her error. By slow degrees her memory gathered up the past till she knew where she really was. But why was she there so late, and why alone?

Then came a little click as of the turning of a button. The room was immediately filled with clear electric light. To her extreme amazement she saw Tony Black standing looking at her in the doorway. He, too, seemed startled and embarrassed at coming thus suddenly upon her.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered. "I understood the captain to say you had gone to your room. Did I disturb you?"

"I was asleep, I think. I must have slept a long time. How late it is! Why didn't some one wake me? Where are the others, and how come you to be here on my sister's yacht?"

He answered slowly, with some embarrassment.

"Late! Yes, it is late." He took out his watch and looked at it fixedly for a moment. Then he put it back in his pocket and continued abruptly: "But in fact, you are not on your brother's yacht, you know, but on mine."

"Yours," she echoed in great surprise.

"Well, not mine exactly, but to all intents and purposes. My uncle has lent it to me for the summer."

She did not hear him. She was trying to remember.

"But surely I did not misunderstand Julia's telegram! And no—I could have made no mistake. Her man met me at the station and put me into the launch. And the captain knew who I was. He expected me."

Tony made no answer. She looked at him with growing suspicion.

"There is some stupid joke which I cannot understand. Please tell me, ex-



plain it to me at once, Mr. Black, or I shall be seriously annoyed."

She had risen to her feet and advanced toward him where he stood near the doorway, in the full brilliancy of the electric light. He did not raise his eyes to meet hers; but kept them fixed on the ground, in a sort of shamefaced, dogged embarrassment.

"It is not a joke," he said at last, the vibrant harshness of his voice betraying some secret agitation. "You have made no mistake. I wanted you to come, you see. I arranged it all for you to come."

Valentine stopped short and gazed at him in a sort of breathless, astounded silence.

"Please tell me exactly what you mean," she said suddenly.

He replied, clumsily at first, and then falling into that monotonous fluency which was one of his mannerisms, and which she always found strangely disconcerting and baffling to listen to. He told her that *he* had sent the telegram. It was months since the man she had recognized had left her sister's employ for his; though that was rather a stroke of good luck; he had not remembered that when he had sent him. The yacht was not going up the Hudson, but on its way to Boston. There was no one else on board. It was all right. Everything was arranged. He had sent word to Julia and her grandmother. No one would be in the least alarmed. And she liked the sea. The long voyage would rest her.

He had more to say, but she felt she could not listen to him a moment longer.

"Stop, please," she said, and he stopped and stood before her motionless.

There was a moment's dead silence. He was waiting for her to be angry. He was, in fact, prepared for a good deal of indignation on her part, at first, until he could explain and make her see just why and how this course of action was necessary for them both.

And indeed she was angry, to a degree that he took long to realize, to a degree that made her incapable of thinking or feeling anything apart from a desire to make him suffer in her dis-

pleasure. As she sat there looking at him from across the table with hot eyes, the one thing that filled all her mind to bursting was a desire to kill Tony, or as she couldn't kill him, to hurt him, to do him crass physical violence, as fitting punishment for his insolence in thus daring to outwit her, to humiliate her, to bring her by force to concordance with the one of his own schemes she had seen fit to thwart.

As she could not tear him with her nails, she turned to hurt him with her tongue. But this, too, had been trained by long years of gentle speech, and she soon felt that the wounds it made could sting only in sensitive places. Tony was not sensitive.

"Am I to understand that you expect me to go away with you?" she asked him, and he said yes.

"And why did you think I would consent to go away with you, suddenly, without preparation, without the knowledge of my family? Did I give you any hope of this when you came to me before—or since?"

He was quite silent. Her anger suddenly flashed up into more open expression.

"How dared you make such a plan to deceive me? What good did you think it would do you to insult me?"

"It is not an insult," he said doggedly, "and it will do a great deal of good. You know you like me. I can make you care for me, if you only give me time. I was afraid you would be angry at first, but I thought you would get over it."

"Get over it!" she echoed, and then rage seemed to take possession of her, blotting out everything in a sort of red haze of passion.

What she said or did in the next few minutes she never knew. But nothing seemed to have happened when she came to herself again. Tony stood before her immovable, impassive, blankly inexpressive, waiting to go on with his explanation. But *she* felt that every nerve and muscle in her body had been torn and broken, as if she had been using physical force against him.

Her anger went out suddenly like a

fire in a place not made for it, and her mind began to work again and exert itself in something like its normal fashion. She began to look over the situation. She was used to overcoming difficulties, mere material difficulties. She had made her weary way through many in the last few days—here were a few more, unnecessary indeed, cruelly unnecessary, imposed by some one who said he cared for her. Her anger against Tony kept flaring up again and again, and confused her when she wished to think calmly. But she tried desperately to put it away while she spoke to him reasonably and calmly, and explained to him what a great mistake he had made.

"Listen," she said at last. "You are quite wrong in thinking that anything you can do for any length of time can have the least effect on me against my will. You have put us both in a perfectly impossible situation, ruinous for me, and ridiculous for you. The only thing now for us is to find a way out of it, as quickly and cheaply as possible."

"Yes, but I don't see how we can get out of it now," he said impassively, "for I left notices of our marriage to be put in all the morning papers."

She flung out her hands towards him across the table.

"Tony, how could you?" she cried in a sort of blank desperation. "How did you dare to do it? It ruins you quite as much as it does me, if you care for me, for how do you suppose I shall ever be able to forgive you, or bear to look at you again?"

"I am sure you won't mind if you only give me time," he reiterated obstinately. "Don't you see that there was no other way? It was always your work and your work—now your work is done for, whatever happens. But you won't regret it, if you only let yourself care for me. And I can make you care for me, even if it is by main force."

"Force," she echoed, and it was for a moment grotesquely amusing to remember all the things she had heard or said about women liking to have their hearts taken by storm. "Not you," she

said with a gasp that might have been laughter, but she saw he did not understand her.

She began to feel vaguely frightened, not so much because the situation itself was any more serious, but because she was exhausted, and seemed to be rapidly approaching the extreme limits of physical endurance. She felt her eyes fill with tears and she was terrified, for she was so little used to weeping that she had no idea what might be the force of the paroxysm if it overcame her.

Tony, however, was quick to notice her distress.

"Don't, Valentine. Please don't," he said, advancing a step towards her.

"Don't touch me," she cried, springing back with a spasm of perfectly undefined terror. A moment after, she was frightened at her own agitation. What did it mean, this sea of unaccustomed, strange emotion which seemed suddenly about to overwhelm her?

There was nothing in Tony to frighten her. Tony was stupid, mistaken, he had been unintentionally very cruel—but he was, after all, a friend of hers. He did not want to hurt her. If she could only get him to understand, he would help her—oh, the weariness of it—to get back, to rearrange, to contradict, to explain. How could she do it alone! She was so tired, so mortally tired. He must help her. She tried again to tell him what she wanted, tried to listen to him when he replied.

"Wait a moment, please," she said, and put one hand behind her to support herself as she sank on the sofa. "It is nothing. I am quite well," she continued impatiently, in answer to the solicitude she saw in the look he bent upon her. "Now tell me again what you have arranged. I want to understand."

"Well, I meant—" he began a little shyly. "I have it all arranged, you know. My man is to meet us in Boston with your trunks. I sent him up the river after them yesterday afternoon, and I have arranged about a maid for you, and anything else we might need you could get there, you know. We

would go on shore to be married. That's all looked out for—there would be no delays. Everything is done to the smallest detail, so that you will have no trouble."

She drew her breath quickly once or twice while he was speaking, as if she would have interrupted him, but she let him go on to the very end, and all the time she felt her nervous force leaving her bit by bit, as blood flows out of an open vein. Everything seemed growing dim around her.

"But in case I don't go. In case I go back," she said at last, with a sort of weak impatience.

"Oh, then," he said, coldly. "Well, I suppose you could get back to New York from Boston by yourself, if you insisted, and I should sail for Liverpool alone."

There was a long silence. She thought disconnectedly, in a sort of anguish, of a thousand maddening little details, like the buying of tickets, the hours of trains. Could she do them, could she bear them? She drew a long, quivering sigh of utter exhaustion.

"I can't," she said, faintly. "I am too tired."

She almost fell against him as he came and stood beside her.

"Dear, dear Valentine," he said, tenderly, and tried to kiss her as she lay against him.

She moved her head feebly in denial.

"Please don't." So he kissed her hands instead and found them cold and shaking. He laid her down among the soft pillows of the divan and made as if he would leave her. She caught at his arm.

"Where are you going?"

"Only to get you something to eat. You are quite done up, and the steward says you had no dinner."

"Don't go away, Tony," she cried plaintively. "Oh, Tony—you have hurt me very much—you have nearly killed me. Please be good to me——"

"With my life, my dear," he answered tenderly, and then when he saw how spent she was, how pitifully exhausted, perhaps just a little, even in the midst of his success, Tony was sorry for what he had done.



## THE RAIN

THIS is the rhyme of the rain on the roof;  
Tears, all tears, slow falling tears—  
If this is the warp, then what is the woof?  
Flesh that sorrows and flesh that fears.

Ah, poor humanity weeping sore,  
Guilt and sorrow, anger and shame,  
Oh! who could peace on this earth restore?  
Who shall punish and who shall blame?

Here where a God loved much was slain,  
Since He hath failed, then who can win?  
On the thirsting ground let them fall again,  
Tears of sorrow and tears of sin.

DORA SIGERSON.

# PRIMROSE'S DERBY

By Eustace Leighton

## I.



ON Christmas night it was barely half-past the hunters' supper time when Jeanne took me back to the stables, but, saving Sir Bors and Trilby, they had all left their mangers, and were waiting eagerly for the story Sir Bors had promised.

I dashed into Billy's box and curled myself up straightaway as tho' for the night. Jeanne couldn't understand it at all, for usually I object to going to bed early. Of course, womanlike, she jumped at once to the unjust conclusion that after I had kept Christmas with the turkey in the dining room I had kept it again with the goose in the servants' hall. However, I wasn't, by way of wasting the precious moments, barking denial over such a miserable and libelous trifle; and Jeanne, seeing I wasn't to be drawn, made her usual good-night round of the boxes and went on her way.

As the door closed on her, Billy pressed his nose to the bars of Sir Bors' box, and said coaxingly:

"Dear Sir Bors, if you have finished supper, we are just on our hind-legs for that story."

Sir Bors whinnied forth a gracious acquiescence, removed a particle or so of crushed oats from his lordly nose, swished his handsome tail many times—which to my mind was distinctly vain-glorious and lacking in tact, considering nearly all the others were docked—and began.

I thought at first, said he, to tell you the story of my own race at Kemton, as it was there that I met and became the

property of the Reverend John. But I think I would rather tell you the story of the Priest, because it has always been to me a proof of my conviction, that, in our sympathy for our human friends, there lies actual extraordinary motive power.

I think you all know that I hail from the stable that trained the Priest. For many months we were boxed alongside, and in this way it came about that I was able to watch the unfolding of a romance, which excited our deepest interest; and, to the comrades of the gallant Galahad, I don't hesitate to affirm my belief that the Derby would not have been won by the Priest, had it not been for the incentive of this love story, which found happy culmination in the Priest's success.

Fynedon lies in the heart of a green country within smell of the sea, just near enough to allow of a gallop over the sands about once a week.

It was on our return from one of these shore gallops, that I first set eyes on Primrose Carey and the man in the black straw hat whom she sometimes called Basil and sometimes St. Paul. John Hussey, our trainer, called him Mr. Paulet.

Most horses divine mortals through the sense of touch. I always look at their eyes. St. Paul had the sort of eyes that can look straight into the sun itself without flinching—valiant eyes, yet tender, too; more tender than Primrose Carey's, though hers were just the lovely color of the harebells which grow in June time all over Fynedon Down. St. Paul noticed it, too. I heard him tell her so one day when he was pinning a little bunch of them into his coat. Primrose seemed might-

ily pleased to hear it—she was monstrous vain! Still, she was very young; they were both most fascinatingly young.

"Isn't he a duck?" demanded Primrose, close to my ear. I looked up quickly, hoping she meant me; but they were leaning against the rail of my unnamed neighbor in the next box.

"Ripping!" assented St. Paul. "That's a nice beast next door," he added, and came my way.

I sniffed at my hay as though I hadn't heard him, but how I loved him! Primrose came over and perked her little inquisitive nose through the bars of the box, to see my name.

"Sir Bors," said she. "Oh! that's the horse that leads him in his gallops." And, really, one might have thought, from her tone, that I didn't matter!

"He looks as though he would take a lot of beating," said St. Paul, and opened my door. I put my head over the bar by way of making friends with him, and Primrose condescended to give me a dear little kiss, and kissing being in the air, St. Paul gave her one, and then another just under her pretty pink ear; at which the ungracious female bounced and flounced, protesting, with the most *blasé* air in the world, that St. Paul was quite too ridiculously young and silly for words.

St. Paul retired to a seat on the corn bin and proceeded to fill his pipe. Primrose—she had far more than her share of the cussedness of her sex, the *charming* cussedness of your sex, Mrs. Trilby!—promptly followed him, and effectually hindered the preparation of the pipe, by stroking the bridge of his remarkably straight nose with an adoring and, it must be acknowledged, a most adorable forefinger.

"Pure—pure Greek!" She said it quite ecstatically; indeed, she couldn't have been more in earnest if she had been trying to sell him. "Basil, you're more like Perugino's Paul to-day than ever."

St. Paul fidgeted ungratefully, and confounded the matches.

"You only need that aureole of hair and——"

I was dying to hear what she was going to say, but St. Paul wasn't. "For Heaven's sake, Primrose," he broke in, "talk sense! Darling, what I mean is some other sort of sense."

Primrose was ruffled. She moved on to the farthest end of the corn bin and dived into reflection. True to her sex, she emerged with malice.

"When you are Archbishop of Canterbury," she opened fire, and you might have thought sugar wouldn't melt in her mouth.

"Primrose," protested St. Paul, "you make me tired."

"I only said *when* out of politeness," she retorted, "of course, I meant *if*. And I was only going to say that even if you lived to be ninety-nine, and by some unparalleled fluke became Archbishop of Canterbury, I was quite sure your ridiculously young look would never desert you, and that I was afraid you would find it absurdly inconvenient."

St. Paul, I remember, grew very pink, and pink he was younger than ever, but his beautiful voice alone always made one think of kings and heroes and mountains and things.

"Your sense of the fitness of things is remarkably undeveloped," he said.

And at that Primrose was mightily indignant.

"I think you are the rudest, the most insulting person in the whole world," she said, her harebell eyes aglow, and back she came to the box of the unnamed with a fine show of dignity; but I noticed, the moment she turned her back on him, the glow of rage had melted to a mist of real mortification, and although I considered she deserved all she got and a great deal more—being so monstrous sensitive concerning her own bit of dignity, and so aggravatingly casual concerning mine and St. Paul's—my heart went straight out to her, as the heart of a thoroughbred always must at the sight of a woman's tears.

St. Paul was ever so sorry, too, I could see. He looked wistfully at her back, and puffed at his pipe for the inspiration of peace.

"Let's christen the colt," he said, coaxingly.

"I have already done so," said Primrose, promptly pulling the other way, and pitching the entire arrogance of her sex into that grandiloquent I—the charming arrogance of your sex, Mrs. Trilby!—"I shall call him St. Paul," said she, with deliberate provocation.

St. Paul sprang up from the corn bin as though he had been spurred.

"You'll do nothing of the kind, Primrose," said he, and there was something splendid in the voice of him.

"Who's to prevent me? You!" mocked Primrose. "It is *I* who am to name the colt, and I shall name him—I have named him—St. Paul."

"You're a very hopeless person," St. Paul said, in a crushing sort of voice. "You're a slave to impulse and your own will; and, as I said, without a gleam of the saving sense of the fitness of things."

"The fitness of things," gibed Primrose. "I suppose you mean by that the fitness, or rather the unfitness, of everything that doesn't chime in with your exceedingly unbecoming hat and coat. Where, may I ask, is your own instinct of the fitness of things in expecting me to give up everything worth calling anything to come and vegetate with you in a poky vicarage on top of a rock without a new frock to my name? Why didn't it restrain you from going into the church, indeed, where everybody says you'll never arrive since you're neither a genius nor a fool, and haven't any money? As Aunt Theresa was only saying yesterday, what have I to look forward to? Nothing. Here are these days of stress or something, and you've not even the ambition to be unorthodox—"

"Damn Aunt Theresa!" rapped out St. Paul, and I thought so myself.

"Oaths!" cried Primrose, and her amazement of superior horror was a thing to remember. "You—a priest!"

St. Paul stood over her, hat in hand, his brave gray eyes blazing darkness and his lips tight gripped, and I knew that something Primrose had let out in her rage had struck home.

"Listen, Primrose," said he, "fit or unfit, I am God's priest, and it's a matter I'll not have brought into discussion. For the rest, as you say, I've neither money nor position nor prospects. I never gave these things a thought when I asked you to marry me—I thought of nothing but the blessedness of what *seemed* our love! I don't blame you for thinking of them—I know these things matter so much more to women— And *you*, especially, have every right to expect your *everything* that is *anything*! Only, sweet, let's say good-by *now*— Our love, to me, has been the holiest thing—the light of my life! I want its memory to be—undimmed."

I know he thought it was a real good-by, because his voice was all over the place, although he looked so valiant and determined. I think he didn't know much about women. I fancy Primrose was his first love, and I guess she'll be his last. At any rate, I could have told him that her temper rose to admiration the moment *Dux* clanged in his voice, and that pride and temper had been fighting tears hard ever since, and, as you may guess, at the first throb of tenderness in his voice, the tears just won in a canter.

"Basil," she sobbed, "only don't be cross, and—I'll get fit somehow!"

And St. Paul caught her to his heart in his strong, young arms with a look that meant—just everything!

"Well," said he, when Primrose had been fussed over to her heart's content, "what are we going to name the colt?"

Primrose meditated half a second, then pressed a dear little coaxing kiss into the palm of his hand.

"We'll call him 'the Priest,'" said she.

"Primrose, you're incorrigible," said St. Paul.

But "the Priest" he was called.

## II.

St. Paul looked in on us many times during that summer, but Primrose only came with him now and then. Meantime the Priest grew and flourished.



John Hussey let him have a right easy time of it. He didn't meet any of his engagements, and seldom went out with the string, but just did steady, slow work with me.

I think it must have been about mid-September that it first occurred to me that there was real good stuff in him. Solomon Sack, the head lad, was riding him, and, as usual, Slippery Sam, with his snip-snap hands and wobbling seat, was my bad luck. Well, they gave us our heads over the mile track, and, by the blue ribbon of my sire, I had a difficulty to shake him off at the finish. At first I thought the lads had been playing games with the weights, but Solomon Sack, who had never been known to open his mouth before breakfast, rapped out such a string of exultant expletives that I could but feel convinced the gallop had been genuine. So I made my best bow to the Priest and prophesied he would meet his engagement for "the Derby."

Of course, it was only courtesy on my part—I never really thought so! You see, the only time he had been called upon to carry colors he had made a monstrous poor show; and, although I knew that the youngster who could get near me, even at a difference of two stone, over a mile and upward, had prospects; you may be a real "good un," indeed you may be one of the best, and yet just that length or so off "Derby" form!

However, when John Hussey was told of it he evinced not one gleam of astonishment, but ordered the lads to "cease their clatter." Nor were the training tactics varied by a hair's breadth, and we passed into the winter months quietly enough.

It was in November we became aware that the "course of true love" was running monstrous rough with Primrose and St. Paul. We had noticed St. Paul's depression for some little time. I'm afraid I had been unjust enough to put it down to a recurrence of top-heaviness on the part of Primrose. However, on one gray afternoon they came in together. Neither of them took any notice of us at all,

but sat straight down on the corn bin and held each other's hand; and dear little Primrose seemed so softly sorry, and was so gentle and kind to him that really one hardly knew her!

We gathered from what they said that Primrose had to go away for some time, and that her father—the Priest's owner—had written from India that there should be no sort of engagement between them until St. Paul was prepared to settle on his wife the sum of five thousand pounds. It seemed that he couldn't have very well written anything more crushing.

All the afternoon they sat there saying good-by. 'Twas most harrowing! I couldn't have swallowed a carrot to save my honor!—even if they had remembered to offer me one. But just before the sun was due to go to sleep it broke through the gray clouds and a straight, sweet sunbeam stole in and shone over them. Then it came a little nearer, so near that it warmed my neck, and flashed in the Priest's eyes.

"That's a good omen," said St. Paul, and I'd like you to have heard the note of valor in his voice, and seen the splendid valor shining in his brave young eyes. "I've won you, sweet," said he, "and I hold you mine against the world."

And the Priest and I stamped Bravo! from the hoof and the heart of us.

With January came the longer days and brisker work and a morning when the Priest, who had continued to flourish, shot past me in the last few yards. This time even John Hussey condescended to hear about it. The same day he came in with St. Paul, and we learned that a week hence a hard question was to be put to the Priest. On his answer depended whether the pen should be put through his name as a candidate for the blue ribbon, or his chance made strong as John Hussey and work could make it. St. Paul seemed ever so pleased. I heard him tell John Hussey that he should send to Miss Carey that very evening, and that she was expected home in a few weeks.

On the morning of the trial we were

saddled at the first glimmer of dawn. Intense excitement throbbed in the atmosphere. John Hussey saddled the Priest himself. I judged I was carrying about one-fourth less than my usual weight. Instinct told me that the Priest would carry the balance. I knew that a beating would mean a *real* beating, and for a second the shadow of dread stood over me. But I tossed my bridle, and clinched the bit, and vowed by the blue blood of my race that it should take the best out of a good un to beat me. And my heart rose high in the grip of that vow as they led me out on to the dewy dawn-lit down.

Abbot Sampson's corner marks the start, and is within fifty yards of the finish of the mile and a quarter track which lies at the far end of the Downs. I remember as we passed on our way there that morning feeling so grateful for the silence, which was unbroken save for the sad but soothing swish, swish of the sea in the distance, and an occasional exasperating cock crow. To my mind the start for an important trial is the very antithesis of a race start. In racing you can always rely on the spirit of things external to lighten your other sense of responsibility. When you fail you're but one of the many, and there's always a friendly extenuating circumstance to play scapegoat. But a trial that means anything, means everything; and, as usual, while we stood waiting for the signal to start, every pulse of me was thudding uncontrollably. However, we hadn't to wait long. A figure came suddenly out of the mist. I heard St. Paul's cheery good-morning. Then John Hussey cried "Go!" And we went.

It's the most inspiring thing in the world to suddenly get rid of one's weight. Weight constrains common sense, and restrains one's every other sense. Carry nine stone or so over a distance for sixteen weeks, and then suddenly find yourself minus two of them—you'll know what I mean. It just goes to one's head. You feel you must fly through the air for the sheer joy of the thing! And there lies the danger; for, believe me, in any distance

over five furlongs, the horse who takes care of self at the start is the horse who takes care of the field at the finish.

With this in mind, I settled down into a steady, swinging gallop, filling my lungs with the cool, sweet air of the morning, and making the ground mine with the longest strides I knew how. Slippery Sam, who was riding me, kept his orders not to budge an inch till we were clear of St. Edmund's Gorse. So far the Priest's hoofs had thudded gently in the rear, but just as he swung round the turn that brought us to the last five furlongs up the straight I heard the crack of Solomon Sack's whip. Slippery Sam promptly took up his, but I doubled my pace before it fell—not that I mind the keen bite of the whip from a hand that understands the how and the when and the why of it. It's a fillip that's raised a last little spurt in me on many a grateful occasion. But if Slippery Sam had dared more than the raising of it, I'd have had him on his back, though it had cost me a Derby. Well, I doubled and doubled again, and still the Priest was there. I cut through the air for the honor of my forbears till the breath grew dry in my throat, and the gray mist of the morning turned blood red! Yet still he stuck at the stern of me. Stuck till the light reeled and earth and sky, locked each to each, spun madly round to be swept away in a flood of glittering fire! Black darkness came; but I fought on through the star-laden whirl of it! Fought till the voices of the watchers . . . the cheers! Then, he shot past me on the post.

Everybody's attention was concentrated on the Priest. I knew they didn't mean to be unkind, and I tried hard to be glad over the stable's good luck—but, indeed, I felt monstrous hipped! You see, it's the tragedy of a race horse that he must leave all chance of the crown behind with his third year. My sire and my grandsire each wore the blue ribbon in his turn, and I knew that I might have worn it, too, if only I hadn't lost my temper over a trifle. I kept on telling myself how glad I was to be outside the din of their vulgar

enthusiasm—but it was no good! That miserable old soothsaying, "There's many a slip" had begun to hiss its evil message in my ear, and there's no knowing how soon I mightn't have tumbled to its consolation; but an understanding hand fell on my shoulder and healed my spleen, and an understanding voice revealed to me once and for all time how much an understanding heart can understand.

"Brave Sir Bors!" said he. And he meant it, although I was beat! God's truth always rung in the voice of St. Paul. "We can't always win, laddie," he whispered, "yet it's hard discipline to lose, isn't it? Youth and success, Sir Bors, is the rare, sweet gift of the gods."

There was that in the voice of him that knew so exactly how it was with me that I couldn't help thinking maybe he had missed his Derby, too. Only humans have always that wonderful gift of love to make up for everything.

Well, time and the hours brought that hard day to a close, and with the morrow started the Priest's preparation for the race for the blue ribbon. You're all good sportsmen, so I guess you've found out, every one of you, that the life-course lies over the sticks. Anyhow, I'll be quite honest with you. After the trial things went badly with me in the stable. Morning, noon and night one heard only one cry—the Priest. I had never played second fiddle in my life, but I would have tumbled to it bravely for St. Paul's sake, only he never came near just then, and everybody else played the game so monstrous low-down. You might have thought that my forbears had lived their noble lives with all their might, merely that I might lead the Priest in his gallops. Food was no longer served to me first. My hoofs were neglected. My toilet was scamped. Even my head stall was taken from me and given to the Priest—for luck—although the wife of my first owner had worked it herself for me and I had worn it ever since. It's trifles such as these that rot one's heart! I made up my mind to two things.

The first was to do everything John

Hussey set me to do with punctilious obedience. Now, it's astonishing what insight trainers and even jockeys have managed to gain into our moods and individualities, but still there are a hundred dodges and more in racing that only a horse can teach a horse. Tattenham Corner is one of them. I knew the Derby course almost as well as I knew Abbot Sampson's mile and a quarter—I knew the *how* of Tattenham Corner; and the second thing to which I made up my mind was to keep my knowledge to myself! Then something happened which made it my race as well as the Priest's. Ay! by the blue blood of my forbears! the race that the Priest might have used my last breath to win, so that he won it.

It came about in this way. Primrose and St. Paul were leaning over the loose rail of the Priest's box and John Hussey was standing in the rear, looking mightily pleased with himself, and airing his views freely, and to my mind most flatteringly, concerning the Priest's chance.

"How does he stand in the market?" asked St. Paul.

"His name hasn't even cropped up in the betting yet," John Hussey answered. "You see, the General being abroad, and not being a betting gentleman, and Miss Carey, I expect, knowing very little about that part of the business, we have had no trouble to keep things close. But, just as a matter of curiosity, I wrote up to Tom Johnson for the odds three days ago. He offered to lay me £5,000 to £500 against the colt."

"That's a long shot," said St. Paul.

"Is it anybody can win that or only you, Mr. Hussey?" inquired Primrose, eagerly.

"Oh, anybody, Miss Carey," said John Hussey, and was going on to explain things when Slippery Sam came in to say would he go back to the house at once.

"Anybody?" cried Primrose, who was one gleam of excitement, "then Basil, you can get our five thousand."

"Can I?" said St. Paul. "How?" And he smiled, but I could see something hurt at the bottom of the smile.

"Well, you've got the £500 your aunt left you."

"And?" said he.

"Oh, don't you see," cried Primrose, who evidently didn't see that St. Paul was, by the way, "pulling her mane," "John Hussey says you can get £5,000 if you've got £500. And father said if you had £5,000 you could marry me. Didn't he?"

St. Paul stooped down and kissed her on the lips.

"Oh, Primrose!" said he, with a real smile, "you're a very sweet goose."

"But the things I said were all facts," maintained Primrose, and I could hear she didn't quite like the way he took her facts.

"Darling," said he, "the Priest's good work has gone to Hussey's head—and, anyhow, there is no such *if* in the world as the racing *if*. But if the winning of that £5,000 were as certain a fact as my poor solitary £500, don't you understand, dearest, that it could not—it *must* not—matter to me."

"Do you mean that although you knew you were *certain* to win," cried Primrose, "and that if you won you could marry me to-morrow—you still wouldn't make just that one silly little bet, because you happen to be a priest?"

St. Paul took her pretty white hands in his and held them tightly against his breast.

"That's just what I mean," said he.

Primrose drew her hands away. I saw a flash of temper.

"Then, since it matters so very little to you whether you marry me or not," said she, "unless you make the bet, I'll marry the next man who asks me."

Primrose was terribly willful, it's true, but I could have told him that that was as empty a threat as I'd ever heard from the tongue of a woman! Not that I think St. Paul would have given it a serious thought, but just at that critical moment John Hussey came back bringing with him Primrose's Aunt Theresa, and a long thin man with a dare-devil look in his big, dark eyes, and a voice that fell on one's ear like the cool drip of water on a red-hot day. Aunt Theresa called him "*dear* Lord Lallington,"

and John Hussey called him "M'Lord." Primrose, out of pure cussedness, I know, called him "Lal" in the most intimate manner, and gushed over him till Aunt Theresa beamed like a bayonet, and I could have kicked the timber of my box into matchwood, for poor, dear St. Paul was looking every minute more like what I felt when I lost the Derby. It was a positive relief when she took his long lordship off to look at John Hussey's new terriers.

"How well they look together! Don't they?" demanded Aunt Theresa of St. Paul. "The dear General will be so pleased. Come along, Basil, Mrs. Hussey is kind enough to say she will give us all some tea, and you and I must amuse each other." She tailed off her good news with a laugh that flayed one's back, and away she marched.

St. Paul leaned against my box for a moment. I couldn't see his face, but his fingers were clinched round one of my bars as though he would burst it. I neighed out how I felt about it all, and rubbed my nose against his tight-strained hand. But for once he didn't seem even to know that I was there. John Hussey waited for him by the open door.

"Mr. Hussey," said he, "one moment."

John Hussey let go the door and came back.

"That offer of Tom Johnson's—£5,000 to £500 against the Priest. I think I understood you to say that you didn't take it."

"No, I certainly didn't take it, Mr. Paulet," said he. "I don't bet in such sums as that."

"Then it's still open?"

"Yes," said he.

"Well, will you wire up at once and take it now?" said St. Paul.

"Certainly," said John Hussey. "I suppose it's for the General, Mr. Paulet, if I may ask."

I felt St. Paul hesitate, though 'twas but for a second.

"No," said he, "it's for me." Then he went out.

I caught a sight of his face as he passed the window, and there was such

a look on it as made me ache to trample the breath out of Primrose Carey's body, for I knew that somehow she had trampled on the indefinable beautiful something that made St. Paul—St. Paul.

John Hussey wrote something in his pocketbook, and shut it with a click.

"By Jove!" said he. "Who'd have thought it?" And in his perturbation he actually went out without shutting the door.

The Priest turned to me in deep anxiety.

"What's it all about, Sir Bors?" said he. "Does it mean if I don't win the Derby dear little Primrose will be very unhappy?"

Dear little Primrose, indeed! Her happiness was a light weight with me just then, and I was nearly incautious enough to say so. However, I controlled the impulse.

"It means just this," said I. "Every race, as you heard St. Paul say just now, hangs more or less on an 'if.' Well, yours is to be a race without an 'if.' If it costs you your last drop of blood—your last breath—you've got to win the Derby!"

### III.

Eleven weeks lay between us and the Epsom summer meeting, and we made the most of them. I taught the Priest every art and artifice that experience and instinct had taught me, and he was an apt and inspiring disciple. The angle at the last five furlongs, with a little manipulation, afforded us an excellent model of Tattenham Corner, and he learned to skim it as lightly and cleanly as a swallow. Before the end of the fourth week, too, he could gallop down hill for all he was worth with his head up instead of down, which is a good five pounds to any horse. Well, as I say, I taught him all I knew, and I was very proud of him. He was gentle, amiable, most grateful, and he never ceased to be deferential; so that I even ceased to feel sore about his having my headstall. Primrose used to fuss over him ridiculously on the rare occasions

of her visits, but, although he was her devoted slave, her extravagant ebullitions never went to his head. Nor was he guilty of the *faux pas* of repeating the compliments paid him, tho' generously quick to pass on any kind things he might hear said of another. Altogether those weeks were happy weeks. St. Paul, it is true, came seldom, and when he did he seemed wrapped in a cloud of sadness, but I knew I was working for him, which in itself was a joy, and the Priest gave one every reason to believe that our work was to be crowned with success, and that had come to be a joy, too; and, taking one thing with another, 'twas with a feeling of regret to think the pleasant training time was over, that I munched my supper on the evening of Sunday that heralded in the Derby week.

We set out for Epsom on the Monday afternoon. John Hussey would have preferred to wait until Tuesday—he had a monstrous antipathy to strange stables—but I had been entered by my owner, an anomaly of the modern and gilded species who didn't know a thoroughbred from a cow, for a quite inferior race on the first day of the meeting. My own race was the Durdans Plate, which, as all of you are no doubt aware, is run on the third day. I knew that John Hussey's persuasive diplomacy would protect me from the threatened humiliation, but, of course, we had to put in an appearance.

Our exodus from Fynedon was worthy of us. As many of the horses were brought out as lads could be found for, and we all assembled on the lawn. Mrs. Hussey and the new baby, the maids, the terrier pup and the black cat joined us. John Hussey, from the back of the Priest, cried out, "To the luck of the stable!" and the stirrup cup went round, and its contents down. Mrs. Hussey wept softly, and the new baby loudly, and I and the Priest passed on our way to the highroad. At the paddock gate must have been every small boy in the village, and most of the ladies and old men. Such a cheer they gave us, and waved at least six pocket handkerchiefs between them, and the small

boys followed us valiantly over the five miles of road that lay between us and the station, just to see the last of us.

With the motion of the train the Priest grew a trifle excited, and when, at the end of the journey, John Hussey led him out of the box, and he caught sight of so many strange horses and heard such divers neighings, I saw there was danger of the novelty of the thing getting to his head. Towards sleeping time I was compelled to remind him very sharply that he carried the happiness of the being he professed to love so devotedly in the nerves as well as the heels of him. He pulled himself together, deeply contrite. He had a right noble way of swallowing criticism, and I never knew him carry an ounce of side.

On Tuesday morning I heard very thankfully that I was to be kept back for the Durdans Plate. We took a morning canter across the Downs, and I was able to show the Priest exactly the lay of Tattenham Corner, which is, to my mind, the outsider's chance of the Derby. Barring this, the best horse should always win; as it is, the worst has always the corner chance.

We passed a very quiet day in the stable. In the evening a winner came back to the box at the far end. He told us the course was very springy, and the crowd the biggest and most inspiring that had ever cheered him home.

The Derby day dawned in mist, but the sun pierced through, and as we sauntered back from the Downs in the early morning it shone brilliant from a cloudless blue sky.

The Priest took his breakfast well, and I could see had himself in hand altogether. You see, there's not only motive power but nerve power lying in human sympathy. When it's just one's own glory one has in mind, one is apt to allow power to evaporate in excitement, but when victory or defeat lie in the scales for the happiness of one you love, your nerves will be cold as ice in the grip of good-will.

We got into the paddock as the starting bell was ringing for the two o'clock race. Being feeding time, it was pretty

empty, but I caught sight of St. Paul and Primrose at the far end and neighed out "Good-day and good cheer!"

Primrose looked just sweet. She had on a frock that was like the foam of the sea on a stormy day. Around her hat was a wreath of dear little harebells, and she had tucked a big bunch of them into her frock. I took one little sniff at them—I couldn't help it, they reminded me so of Fynedon; and, anyhow, it wasn't any harm. But, oh! her airs and graces! St. Paul had only about three in his coat, but he let me sniff as much as I liked, although he seemed very sad, and his eyes had their "over the hills and far away" look in them. However, sad people are always kinder than glad people.

The crowd streamed in after lunch, and the little groups around the Derby candidates swelled considerably. You couldn't catch a glimpse of the favorite but, of course, we stood a long way off him in this betting. Still, our court, if small, was significant, and before the Priest left the paddock he'd leaped into some notice, and backers who knew "a thing or two" hurried off to get 100 to 8 while they might.

I was the first to apprehend Aunt Theresa. 'Twas her parasol I caught sight of first. I couldn't think what it reminded me of, and then I remembered it was exactly the color of Solomon Sack's nose—clover color. Aunt Theresa's face, too, was much of the same tint; indeed, I wondered if she had matched it herself accidentally or some friend had done it on purpose.

Not the faintest notice did she take of St. Paul's greeting, but made straight for Primrose, battle in her eye. Aunt Theresa was a born belligerent.

"Come, Primrose," said she, "we are going to watch the race from Lord Lallington's box."

"Are you?" said Primrose, sweetly. "I'm going to the winning post with—Basil."

The clover-colored parasol reeled badly.

"Primrose, how dare you defy me?" said she, in an angry whisper, but quickly saw that rage would be thrown



away. "Dearest," she implored, "don't humiliate me! The Duchess of Cant has just asked me if she might congratulate me on your engagement. Her manner was so exasperatingly supercilious that I couldn't resist saying yes. I've left her green with envy. Primrose, *dearest*, you'll not break my heart?"

Primrose threw back her charming head and laughed. Such a laugh! I knew exactly how they both felt.

"It's most dear of you, Lal, to give us your box," she said. "I'll come to tea without fail. But I'm going to watch the Derby from the winning post with Mr. Paulet."

Lord Lallington took it like a sportsman.

"Then you and I had better be getting back," he said to Aunt Theresa. "And the best of good luck to you, Primrose!" said he.

"Immodest, ungrateful! I've done with you," Aunt Theresa muttered, in malevolent gasps, as she passed; but Primrose continued to smile serenely and Aunt Theresa went on her way, the treacherous parasol giving her rage away all along the line.

"Hadh't you better have gone, dear?" said St. Paul. "I'm afraid she'll make you pay for it by and by."

"I suppose you don't want to be bothered with me," said Primrose, huffily. No doubt she had expected praise for her bit of valor.

"Don't, darling. It will be so soon all over *now*," said St. Paul, and there was such bitter despair in his voice.

I felt Primrose grip my chest at the sound of it, and I was about to protest when she spoke.

"Basil," said she, "there's just one thing before we go. I want to tell you that—that I've never been so sorry for anything in my life as having made you make that hateful bet. I didn't mean what I said—at least, only for a moment. I did so want you to love me even better than being good. But I've hated myself ever since! If he wins, you and I will build a church or something with the miserable money. But if he doesn't— Will you promise—

would you mind— Oh, Basil! will you marry me to-morrow?"

Her voice had aches and breaks and a world of tears, but St. Paul answered never a word.

"I know we won't have any money," she went on, recklessly, "because, of course, even your five hundred pounds will be gone. But a special license only costs twenty-five pounds—I looked it up, in Whittaker, I think it was—so I asked Aunt Theresa to lend me twenty-five pounds to bet with, and here it is. And I don't mind asking *you* to marry me. Anybody else might throw it at me. But *you're* always—St. Paul."

Her hand had been gripping at my poor chest for dear life, but I didn't mind a bit. St. Paul's closed over it. A reverent, radiant light was shining in the depths of his valiant eyes. He looked as though he had won a splendid race.

"God love you, sweet!" said he.

Slippery Sam and I were the only members of our party left in the paddock.

To the rise and fall echo of four false starts, "Damme! they're off!" shouted Slippery Sam. But I was beyond irritation. At last "They're off!" came straight and clean from the voice of the crowd. Then, silence.

Time and space rolled away. The sky was so heavenly blue—the earth so fresh and kind. I knew they would help us through.

"They come! they come!" roared the crowd, and my heart soared high on its song. The sun shone gold with hope—I wouldn't fear.

"The favorite wins! The favorite! Twenty to one on Mirabeau!" The paddock reeled and the light went out.

. . . A lull—a groan—a sudden cry! "He's beat! The favorite's beat! The dark horse wins!"

A ringing, splendid cheer straight up from the heart of the people. And somehow I knew it was *ours*! Higher it rose and nearer it came—the tribute of sportsmen to a sportsman's pluck! Cheer after deafening cheer! And on the wave of that splendid roar there flashed two words:

"The Priest!"

# THE VIOLET GIRL

By Jeannette Scott Benton



R. CHESTER was mounting the steps at the Union Station when he met Mrs. Aberdeen.

"Oh, how fortunate!" she exclaimed. "Are you in a hurry?"

"Not at all," he responded, "especially if you have any use for me."

He turned and walked down with her.

"The C. & A. train is nearly due," she explained, "and I am on my way to the gate. I am expecting my niece from Virginia, Virginia Hamilton. She is to spend the winter with me. The last time I saw her she was six years old and a veritable czarina to a drove of pickaninnies. I am wondering if I will know her. I will, though, because she is a Hamilton. Mr. Aberdeen, you know, is to be in London the greater part of the winter and I could not go with him on account of the babies, so I simply commanded Virginia here. It is a sin, anyway, to bury a girl in that dear little dead-and-gone town down in Virginia. You were just the one I intended especially appealing to to assist me a bit in launching her."

He looked at her quickly, but Mrs. Aberdeen's handsome face was placidly unconscious.

"Your family is really good, you know. So many Chicago young men don't seem to have any family in particular. That was why I thought of you and your cousin, Mr. Arthur Chester. Meeting you this way is certainly quite in the way of a providence."

"Yes, quite so," Mr. Chester responded, vaguely. He had so often been looked upon in the light of a providence

that he was not at all ready to commit himself.

"Why, the C. & A. train is already in," she exclaimed, as they reached the gate.

A girl was coming leisurely down the steps of the parlor car, assisted with almost painful assiduity by both the conductor and the porter. Behind her a particularly dark and kinky negro girl, her arms filled with traveling bag and wraps, rolled her eyes anxiously at the throng.

Mrs. Aberdeen grasped his arm in her excitement.

"That's Virginia," she whispered. "Isn't she perfectly adorable?"

Then she rushed forward and swept the girl into an impetuous embrace.

"You darling," she cried, "you bit of Old Virginia. You rest my eyes, honey, you surely do. Did you know your auntie, sweet?"

The girl laughed, joyously.

"I did not even see you, but I would have known you, though, because you are just mamma; younger, of course"—a mischievous look came into her face—"but not a bit prettier."

She spoke in a soft, throaty drawl, with deliciously broad vowels.

"Oh, how good you sound," cried Mrs. Aberdeen, delightedly. "Virginia, this is Mr. Chester, who met a lady in distress and will assist us to the carriage."

She gave him a slim, cordial hand, then turned again to her aunt.

As they made their way through the throng he noted the gallant swing of her lithe, young body; the exquisite pallor of her perfect skin, and her lashes, as they rested on the rounded curves of

her cheeks, were, he thought, the longest and darkest he had ever seen.

"She is not half bad, this young Virginian," he commented to himself.

Just then he came into violent contact with the black maid, who was holding desperately to her mistress' skirts.

Miss Hamilton turned instantly.

"There, there, Monica," she said, soothingly, "don't be frightened, nothing will hurt you. Don't hold my skirt quite so tight, though, I can hardly walk. The poor child," she continued, apologetically, "she never saw so many people before an' she don't know what is going to happen. Monica, I believe you better hold to my coat sleeve, I can't walk. There, that is better."

She patted the girl's hand affectionately, then glanced toward Mr. Chester with a smile that brought a delightful dimple into one cheek: "Monica is a dear, but she isn't always—you know, entirely well poised."

Mr. Chester thought of any girl he knew in a similar situation and laughed.

Evidently his tone did not suit, for the dimple instantly disappeared and she said, gravely: "Monica is very faithful and good. There is really nothing to laugh at about her."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Hamilton," he apologized. "I was not laughing at Monica. I was laughing at human nature, as it occurred to me."

She nodded comprehendingly. "Oh, yes, I know," she answered; "I frequently do. It is very funny sometimes, but I did not think your laugh sounded that way."

"I don't know myself that it was exactly gentle merriment," he responded, thoughtfully.

After he had put them in the carriage he stood an instant on the curb watching it roll away.

"Now there is a girl," he thought: "just a sweet, wholesome girl. She will be like a fragrant dewy bunch of violets in a milliner's flower box."

Later in the evening, in the solitude of his rooms, he found himself saying aloud, quite to his own surprise: "I do not suppose the size of a man's bank account would ever occur to her."

Mrs. Aberdeen turned to her niece when the carriage door shut.

"Don't you think he is very nice looking, Virginia? There are two of them, cousins. They are from an old Philadelphia family. Your uncle knew them well. The other one, Arthur—this one is Robert—has heaps of money; made a good deal of it himself, too; but this one, from what I hear, is not especially successful; just sort of manages to keep up. They are nice, though, both of them. I have asked them to call."

Virginia's dark eyes rested interestedly on her aunt's face.

"Is the other one handsome, too?" she inquired.

Mrs. Aberdeen laughed.

"That shows your opinion of this one, and you must remember the other one has a golden halo in addition; they are generally becoming."

The next day Mr. Chester received a note from Mrs. Aberdeen.

"If you have no engagement," she wrote, "I should be pleased to have you and your cousin, Mr. Arthur, share our box at the Auditorium to-night. Kindly extend this informal invitation to him."

"Mrs. Aberdeen is certainly very cordial," he commented, as he laid the note down.

The ladies were in their box when the young men arrived, even though, as Arthur remarked, "it was so beastly early." He touched his cousin's arm as they entered.

"Look up there," he murmured. "Is that your bunch of violets young woman? Heavens, violets! Why, man, she is as tropical as an orchid. I would not call her especially shrinking, either."

Robert followed his cousin's glance to the box. Mrs. Aberdeen was partially concealed by the curtains, but the girl stood out against them. A rose-pink opera cloak half slipping from her perfect shoulders made a background for a wonderful gown of cream lace. A rioting mass of pale brown hair crowned her small, perfectly poised head. She was leaning slightly forward, her great, dark-fringed eyes coolly sweeping the house.

Half the opera glasses in the audience

were leveled at her, but she stood apparently unmoved.

Mr. Chester frowned. It was hardly what he had expected from the sweet-looked girl at the station yesterday.

Mrs. Aberdeen met them at the back of the box with extended hands and a rippling little laugh.

"That blessed child," she said. "Was there ever anything like her? She has never been inside a theater before and she is as delighted as my four-year-old Julie would be. She is perfectly absorbed in so much to see, and totally unconscious of the attention she is attracting."

"Really," drawled Mr. Arthur Chester; "how unusual."

"You blasted idiot," Robert murmured under his breath.

"Virginia," her aunt called. She turned to them, her cheeks faintly flushed and eyes shining.

"Isn't it perfectly wonderful?" she whispered, then she blushed. "I expect it does not look quite so fine to you all as it does to me. I hope you will not think I am too curious?"

From under the long fringe of her lashes she was regarding the men quite as curiously as she had the theater. They were still more of her picture world become realities—"The Gibsons," "Van Bibber." Julie could not have regarded new dolls with more interest and less consciousness.

"You have not met Mr. Arthur Chester, Virginia," prompted her aunt.

"No," Virginia answered, with a friendly little smile. "I am very glad to, though," but her thoughts were now evidently elsewhere.

"Wouldn't you all rather come forward?" she suggested. "I shouldn't like to miss seeing the curtain go up." She laughed an amused little laugh. "I must seem very childish, but to read of places and people like these all your life and then to actually see them is very interesting."

Then she turned and swept to the front of the box with the poise of a young princess.

The Chesters promptly followed, one of them, at least, decidedly interested.

This childlike Juno, with her stately enthusiasm, was a new experience.

Calvé and the De Reszkes interpreted "Faust" that night, and it is doubtful if they ever had a more appreciative spectator.

When the curtain finally fell she rose slowly, and there was a sparkle of tears on her lashes.

"I did not know," she said, thoughtfully, "there were so many emotions."

"Virginia," Mrs. Aberdeen asked, as they were going home, "which of the men did you like the best?"

The girl hesitated an instant, thinking before she answered.

"The last Mr. Chester has a way of looking at you as though you were a mathematical problem and he had to solve you, or as though he were wondering how good an antagonist you would make in a duel. I don't believe, auntie, I like him very much."

Mrs. Aberdeen sighed.

"I was in hopes," she said, then she stopped abruptly.

The "last Mr. Chester," on his part, was silent until the cab had nearly reached his apartments, then he remarked:

"You weren't so far wrong, Bobs. That girl is simply tremendous as regards style, and still there is something fragrant and gentle about her personality that curiously reminds one of violets. You might say," he laughed rather depreciatingly, "she had a violet soul."

Robert looked at him astonished. It was the prettiest thing he had ever heard him say about a woman.

One evening, quite three months later, Arthur Chester came into his cousin's rooms. He was always well groomed, but to-night he was noticeably irreproachable and apparently not at all at ease. He strolled the floor restlessly a few minutes; finally he spoke:

"See here, Bobs, I don't want to make a fool of myself. I am going up to the Aberdeens to-night."

"If that is an evidence, aren't you rather late in objecting to it?" queried Robert, gently.

His cousin hesitated, then hurried on.

"What I want to know is, have you any claim——"

"How did you find out her financial rating?" interrupted his listener.

The other turned sullenly.

"I supposed you would ask that. I don't know her financial rating. I don't care. I only know—see here, I can't talk this thing with you. I believe it is either you or me, Bobs. All I ask of you is to tell me, have I still my chance?"

His weary, *blasé* eyes searched his cousin's face eagerly.

"I have not spoken," Robert answered. "You have your 'chance'; only," he smiled, "if you are successful will you come back here to-night? I shall wait."

Arthur laid his hand on his cousin's shoulder.

"Heaven grant that I see you again to-night," he murmured, half under his breath.

Robert shook his hand off.

"I can't say 'amen,' Art, but I wish you would go. You are getting on my nerves."

"If I thought I should see him again," he muttered as the door closed. Still he was not uneasy. Those long, fringed, dark, child eyes had unwittingly said too much. It had been such a delight, though, to linger in the elusive border land that he had hesitated to confirm his happiness. Neither did he care whether she came with wealth or empty hands. But Art? Who could have thought that Art could so far forget himself? He smiled pityingly, then he gave himself up to dreams.

He did not know how long it was until he was recalled to himself by a step in the hall and a knock at the door. He sprang up, a deadly fear clutching his heart.

"I promised to come, old man," Arthur's voice rang triumphantly, "I am here."

In a great many ways this broad-shouldered cousin of his had got the better of Mr. Arthur, and the latter was not at all averse to rather rubbing it in now.

He came in and sat down.

"She is curiously shy for so regal a

creature," he commenced remorselessly, after a little silence. "That is part of her wonderful charm, don't you think?"

Robert stood quietly holding the door. Things were crashing all about him—hopes, ideals, faith. His cousin's words fell harmlessly. He only waited for him to go and at last he went, with a triumphant smile, through the patiently-held door. Then Robert shut it.

"I wonder how long it will take me to readjust myself?" he thought one morning, as he sat listlessly over his mail. Suddenly his eyes fell on a square, heavy envelope. He recognized the writing instantly. His hand trembled so when he opened it that he smiled a little from very self-pity.

"The older you are the harder it goes, I have always heard," he murmured.

There was very little inside:

"Please come up this evening.

"VIRGINIA HAMILTON."

But it was enough to make hot indignation surge up in him.

"What is she?" he thought. "What does she want to do?"

He sat a long time trying to think, then gave it up and waited in dull impatience for night.

He was ushered into the small, familiar room behind the library, and almost instantly Virginia parted the heavy curtains.

He looked at her astonished. She was so pathetically white. Her eyes were swollen and her lashes looked startlingly black against her cheeks.

She stood an instant, her hand clutching the curtain.

"Has your cousin told you?" she asked, abruptly.

"Certainly," he answered, "that night."

"I have not seen him since."

She spoke very low, and there was a strong note of appeal in her voice.

"What?" he exclaimed. "Not seen him? The cad, the scoundrel! I will go, Miss Hamilton——"

She raised her hand in a quick gesture of dissent, and a wan little smile quivered over her face. "Oh, no, no, you misunderstand. He has been here, very

many times, but I have not chosen to see him, and you—you have not come at all."

"Did you expect me?" he asked, uncertainly.

Her voice broke a little.

"I wanted you so—and then I had to send for you. Sit down and don't look at me. I must tell you. Things are very dreadful. I don't know what to do, and auntie won't say a word."

She stopped an instant, then launched out desperately.

"When I came up here I came because I wanted to find and marry some one that was rich—"

He gave her one amazed glance, then as quickly averted his eyes.

"It just had to be done. We all are so poor. Why, do you know the Hamiltons have lived in one house seventy-five years, and we will have to leave it in just a few months if something don't happen. It will kill mamma, too."

Her voice sank to almost a whisper.

"There is a mortgage of seven thousand dollars on it, and we haven't anything. There is just mamma, Hal and I. Hal is getting ready for college, but he can't go, and mamma hasn't dared to tell him. Why, my coming here was taking the bread from their mouths. Old auntie, she is Monica's mother, you know, said, and they all talked the same way: 'That chile is gwine, if every nigger on the place lives on cohn pone for a yeah,' and mamma took all the most precious great-grandmother laces and the dresses that had been laid away, sacred relics in the family for years and years, and sewed her dear fingers to the bone for me. 'Sweetheart,' she said, 'you shall have one happy time.' They all thought I was a child who did not think or care, and I took it all and came because to marry some one rich was all the way I could help them. I have read of girls doing that way, haven't you? I knew there must be plenty of rich young men here. Then auntie told me what heaps of money your cousin had when I first came, but some way I couldn't really like him. Afterwards I did not think much about it—I am afraid I forgot a good deal and just

let myself have a beautiful time. The other night when he asked me I knew it had come, the thing I came here for, and I thought of mamma and Hal and the dear old home, and I shut my teeth and said 'yes.' Then he came toward me," she threw her hands out with a despairing gesture, "and—I ran away. I did not know how it was. I did not know liking anyone mattered so much—"

She stopped suddenly, and, dropping down, hid her face on the arm of the great couch.

The silence in the room was broken by a slight disturbance in the library, and Robert heard his cousin's voice ring out impatiently:

"No matter what anyone told you, take my card to Miss Hamilton and tell her I must see her, you understand?"

He went over to the couch.

"Virginia," he said, "you have got to meet him. You have got to decide."

She raised her face and looked at him, but the pitiful appeal in her eyes met no response. She drew a sharp breath and rose slowly.

"I must think of mamma and Hal, I must," she repeated.

His face whitened—for an instant his hand almost touched her shoulders, then dropped.

Without one backward glance she went through the heavy curtains into the library.

He dropped back on the couch and covered his face with his hands, but to save his honor he could not help straining his ears to the sounds in the adjoining room.

His cousin's voice, eager, impetuous; the soft, low, throaty response. Then it suddenly changed.

"Oh, no, no," she cried out in quick protest. Then a despairing break, "I just can't."

Ten minutes later she parted the curtains and stood white and breathless with frightened eyes.

"I am so wicked," she panted. "Just as soon as I saw him I could not think of mamma and Hal. I had to tell him it was a mistake, and—and he wasn't nice; he wasn't even polite."



Robert threw his shoulders back as though they were suddenly loosed from a burden.

"Virginia," he said, "come here."

She obeyed unhesitatingly, and with a tired little sob laid her head on his shoulder as he drew her protectingly toward him.

"I am so selfish, so ungrateful," she protested.

He patted her soothingly.

"Don't think of it, little girl. You are all right. We will manage to keep the home in the Hamilton family and send Hal to college, too."

She lifted her head and looked at him. For an instant her face became radiant, then it clouded.

"That wouldn't be right," she said, anxiously. "Auntie told me how you hadn't been quite fortunate."

He smiled reassuringly.

"Fortunate enough for that, sweet one. That is, if you can be very economical."

"Oh, I can," she answered, eagerly. "I won't mind if I never have anything."

He drew her closer.

"Unquestionably," he said, fervently, "your aunt notwithstanding, I am the most fortunate man in the world."

An hour later he stood on the doorstep. He stood thoughtfully an instant, then suddenly turned and went back. She was still standing as he had left her, her great eyes glowing and a faint flush on the soft pallor of her cheeks.

"Virginia, sweet one," he said, "there is just one thing I have not told. Your aunt mixed things a little in the information she gave you. I happen to be the Mr. Chester with 'heaps of money.'"

She looked at him bewildered.

"Oh, is it so?" she gasped. Then she was silent, trying evidently to readjust herself.

"I am very sorry for your cousin now," she said, slowly. "He must have really cared, but"—again she frowned, thoughtfully—"it was a beautiful mistake. I might always have been afraid I married you for your money."

He laughed happily.

"Somehow, little girl, I don't believe I would, but still this is very satisfactory."



## THE HAND

LO, it softly locks  
 The hill flower in the rocks,  
 Skeins the willow,  
 Manes the billow,  
 Sets the cedar straight;  
 Paints the she bird's mate,  
 Hangs the apple on his tree,  
 Steers the cloud-ship on her sea,  
 Fires the nigh dewdrop, and, afar,  
 The haughty rondure of the star,  
 Gives the loosed wind his track,  
 Brings the summer back,  
 Binds the morning's crown,  
 And lets the darkness down.  
 So doth the Hand, the Power,  
 That giveth thee thine hour.

JOHN VANCE CHENEY.

# THE LITTLE RED BOOKS

By Olivia Howard Dunbar



UNCLE STEPHEN'S present did not arrive until the day before the wedding.

Yet this tardiness occasioned not so much remark as did the gift itself, the wonder being that that picturesque old miser, Stephen Hamersley, should have parted with any piece of property for which he was not immediately to receive a full equivalent.

It was literally true that Uncle Stephen had never been known to make a gift before, out of those uncounted hordes of his; and though one certainly would not have looked to him for diamond pendants or gold bonbon dishes, one could not readily surmise why he had acquired, and for what purpose he had designed, those twin red volumes, thin, oblong, leather-bound and filled with blank pages, that had so incongruously alighted amid the massive display of bridal purple and fine linen, of silver and gold and precious gems.

In other circumstances, the little books might readily have been dedicated to any one of a score of homely, everyday uses—diaries, engagement or account books. But why so noncommittal a gift to a bride with whom, at this time, one could associate only splendor and abundance? And why in duplicate?

Rose Hamersley, it happened, was the most light-hearted of brides.

"Mine not to reason why!" she gayly declared to her group of bridesmaids. "I choose to construe it as a supreme distinction that I should have been the first to awaken the virtue of generosity in my thrifty uncle. I suspect that he appreciates me and I shall promptly send him my love. And as it does not

seem necessary to have the books locked up in the vault, with the other things, I shall even take them with me, in my bag. Here, Margie, please pack them for me."

"But Uncle Stephen's such a sinister old person, Rose," objected her sister. "If I were you, I should be afraid to take his gift on my wedding journey."

"On the contrary, he has proved the most delightfully original of all my relatives. And the little red books must go."

The wedding was at noon the next day—a glittering and perfumed affair, ornate with every detail that social tradition could suggest or the paternal purse supply.

Mr. Hamersley's approval of his daughter's choice of a husband was indicated by the rich completeness of the occasion, as were the bride's loveliness and popularity by the spontaneous gayety that not even the bridegroom's dignity could check. While in such secure esteem, socially, was the Hamersley family held that even had Rose's remotest acquaintances and far-outlying relatives not appreciated the desirability of cementing their connection with a charming young girl who was marrying the second cousin of a duke—and, of course, one never knows what will happen!—even then, it is safe to say that the wedding gifts would have been scarcely less expensive and imposing.

At half-past three the brilliant flame of the bridal spectacle was already ashes and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hugh Talbot were being driven to catch the three-forty-five for New York. Of this interesting pair, Mr. Talbot alone contemplated with thorough satisfaction the

goal of their journey. Henry Hugh had been quite immovable in that fine, manly way of his, and had insisted with such affectionate, yet such logical firmness upon his own choice of a setting for their honeymoon, that Rose had at last good-humoredly yielded. And it should be said in extenuation of this apparent weakness in her character that she was only twenty-two; that she was in some haste to assure her family and bridesmaids of the mysterious delights of "our secret," and that it was, after all, a time-honored instinct that prompted her to accept the woman's portion.

It did not occur either to Mr. or Mrs. Talbot to conceal the novelty of their position; to Rose, because she was young enough to enjoy her bridal day for its own sake and cultivated assiduously all the emotions it might be expected to arouse, or to Henry Hugh, because he was accustomed to present a square shoulder to the world and saw no reason why every act of his should not be as open as it was unimpeachable. So, when they were happily settled in the Pullman against a background of suspiciously unsoiled luggage, Rose herself, that sparkling, dainty little person, immaculately bridal in blue broadcloth and a quite wonderful little blue-and-white hat—the attention of more than one curious traveler was fastened benignly upon them.

"I shall love it, wherever we go!" magnanimously exclaimed Rose, leaning back with flushed cheeks to yield for a moment to the fatigue of the wedding—of which, now that it was over, she found that she could recall surprisingly little—"even though it isn't to be Palm Beach. Dear me, such moonlights!—and just now, at Easter time!"

"Ah, but it's so very southern!" Henry's manner combined mild reproof with a suggestion of an injured feeling.

"As southern as can be," laughed Rose. "The South seems to me so much more—bridal, than any other place. Though we are different from other people. We could be happy anywhere!"

Henry frowned ever so slightly.

"But, my dear, you are aware that I gave this matter a great deal of thought and decided that it was an occasion for yielding to the claims of sentiment."

"Of course!" piped Rose, with her quite irrepressible laugh. "That's really all I'm considering, you know—sentiment!"

"And you have already admitted," continued Henry, gravely, "that Florida might seem a trifle—shall we say far-fetched?—when within a two days' journey lies our own sovereign's territory. And on our first journey together—"

"That's just it, dear." Rose patted her husband's arm surreptitiously. "What difference does it make where we go? I don't mind a bit that it isn't in the least original, or that it was, so many years ago, 'Their Wedding Journey.'"

"Whose?" blandly inquired Henry Hugh.

"The Marches."

"I do not know them. But, as I say, I think you would enjoy nothing so much as what I have planned. At all events, since we are unable to get to England for several months, I feel that, as an Englishman, I can really do no less."

Rose looked a little wonderingly at her husband, her wonder, however, tempered by the conviction, which she held in common with Henry Hugh's entire circle of acquaintance, that he was quite all that could be looked for in a man and a bridegroom.

Somewhat over thirty—nobody knew how much, but at all events a dignified age; a member of an old English family and a rising figure in the English consular service; with "aristocrat" and "public man" written all over him, Rose's bridegroom would have made an impression anywhere. In any garb and in any circumstances, Talbot's was a commanding figure; though, it is true, he seemed most himself when facing assemblies of persons and in a frock coat, that garment in which a man may appear either princely or ridiculous. And although he realized that he owed it to himself to preserve a stand-

ard of faultless conventionality in his dress, Henry Hugh chose to emphasize and seal his distinction by permitting himself, always, something just a little bizarre and individual in the way of a scarf pin. Had he been the British Colonial Secretary—whom he has been heard warmly to admire—Henry Hugh, likewise, would have stared imperiously through a single eyeglass and worn each day a fresh orchid in his coat.

"I agree with all you say, Henry," commented the bride, with wifely docility. "And yet my heart was quite set on Florida. How does it happen, darling, that we should have such different views? It seemed to me, while we were engaged, that we should always see everything alike—that that was indeed a part of such a happy marriage as ours."

"And yet, my dear," said Henry, who quite approved of the spirit of this ingenuous confession, "how interesting it will be to have this opportunity of learning each other's tastes, to lay the foundation, as it were, for our lifetime of association!"

"Exactly," assented Rose. "We can make a study of each other, and learn each other's funny little ways, so that whatever happens, we need never quarrel. And—oh, Henry, it has just occurred to me—Uncle Stephen's wedding present is in my bag, the little red books. Now why not each take a book, you and I, and write down in it everything that we learn from day to day, all each other's tastes and habits and characteristics—a kind of lovers' diary! And of course we shall never show them, but keep them for our own most intimate private reference, a 'handy guide to matrimony' after we get back. Poor Uncle Stephen's present did not seem to have much sentiment about it—did it?—and yet we can make of it a complete sentimental repository. Isn't it funny?"

Henry Hugh agreed, as he had usually the good taste to do in minor matters, and his half of Uncle Stephen's present was extracted from the bag and handed over to him without delay.

In a few hours more, the bridal pair

were definitely on their way to the northern country. It was of course nobody's fault if the journey had been made before and if the St. Lawrence region does seem tritely to belong to those countries which, as Flaubert once said, seem to have been especially designed by nature for the celebration of honeymoons. When a logician such as Henry Hugh and a philosopher such as Rose unite in an expedition, its success surely need not depend upon the mere accident of geography.

Thus the first twenty-four hours were so serenely spent that at their expiration Rose applied herself with girlish enthusiasm to her first inscription in the red book, insisting that Henry Hugh make his at the same time. Rose's entry, in an open, ingenuous handwriting, was as follows:

"I look back with complete happiness on yesterday, my wedding day, the most important of my life. Henry, as always, was quite perfect. But I am to record here, not the extent of my love for him, but the new things I learn about him, to be memorized for our future happiness. Henry has a wonderful spirit of patriotism and great strength and self-confidence. He does not care, for instance, that this Canadian trip has become rather commonplace. That is, he is superior to mere originality. He is also extremely fond of marmalade. He is, it is true, an obstinate dear, which is, I should say, one of those English qualities that he is not responsible for. We are having a perfect time and he is so good to me, such a comfort and protection."

Henry's remarks, meanwhile, were more concise.

"We are well started on our most auspicious journey. Rose is convinced that, after all, my plan was the wiser one. We are very happy and Rose's enthusiasm is most charming, even though she should prove to be a bit over-impulsive like her Aunt Louise. She is sensible and clear-headed in regard to the difficulties of travel. I agreed to-day that we shall not permit ourselves to become known in any of the Canadian cities, as Rose has a girlish and possibly a bit bourgeois fancy that we should eliminate the social element from our wedding journey."

At Lake George, Henry considered it proper and dignified to pause for a day; and as Rose's only objection was that the hotel seemed somewhat forlorn and

chilly, it being considerably in advance of the "season," this naturally did not move her logical lord a jot from his well-taken position.

"This affords," declaimed Henry, "a natural break, my dear, in our journey. Moreover, our time may very profitably be spent in driving about to note whatever there may be of interest in the vicinity. I do not wish you to get over-fatigued by incessant travel."

Rose was as eager to think as Henry thought, as she was weak in argument; and the day was accordingly spent in a manner dear to Henry's heart. To drive in a comfortable carriage and patronize the scenery always gave this distinguished traveler a satisfying sense of power and well-being; and with his charming young bride by his side, these agreeable sensations were naturally much intensified.

Nor was Rose conscious of any cloud in her connubial heaven. She liked the sweet spring fragrances, she was not too much bored by what the driver called the "prospects," and she delighted in the prolonged *tête-à-tête* that the drive afforded. At night—but this time without any spoken suggestion—both Rose and Henry took their pens and devoted themselves to the second pages of their little red books. Rose wrote:

"Henry's tastes are becoming clear to me. He enjoys serious things and delights in acquiring information, even though he seems to think American history of very little importance. And he is very firm on the point of having his roast beef rare. Lovely as he is—and I am sure I can never admire him enough—he reminds me of what mother said, that no man ever remembers things. Today is the anniversary of our first meeting and he has not mentioned it. It is very interesting, this study of one's husband, the dearest person in the world to one. Some day I must tell Uncle Stephen about it. I forgot to say that Henry loves nature, and he makes me feel for the first time that I do not. We have different ideas about almost everything, but dear Henry says we shall grow to think alike after a little."

Henry's confidences to the red book were briefer.

"Day by day I am trying to teach Rose what I can; and really find that I receive

something from her in return, even though she has an undisciplined mind. She does not, at present, understand me; but she has a warm and affectionate nature which, when brought under proper control, will be a source of much happiness to us both. It is gratifying to observe that Rose is greatly admired."

An interval of two days was considered sufficient to devote to Montreal. It was really very hard for Henry Hugh to travel incognito on British soil; but it is likewise distinctly to his credit that once having made up his mind to this sacrifice, he said no more about it and devoted himself, instead, to a conscientious examination of civic beauties and defects.

At the close of this inspection Henry Hugh expressed himself to Rose as greatly gratified by certain new public buildings that were being erected, but even more by the warm spirit of loyalty which he everywhere saw manifested toward His Majesty. Had he been personally appointed by his sovereign as monitor over Canadian devotion to the crown, he could not have taken his investigations more seriously. Henry Hugh's conversation was really delightful, and so seldom was it of a private nature that he who ran might very safely hear. Henry Hugh would have been the last to object.

Rose was as receptive of general information and as interested in international concerns as is the average young woman of twenty-two. For fully an hour at a time she could devote her quick intelligence and sparkling gayety to a consideration of the architecture of Montreal or the future of Canada. After that, her interest lapsed. The lapses troubled Henry Hugh. He mentioned them in the red book, and he tried, conscientiously, to build up Rose's mind.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Talbot's own red book was not innocent of entries. In certain faltering and not always intelligible phrases, the prominence and insistence of Henry Hugh's public interests as opposed to his private ones, were repeatedly dwelt upon. It was almost as if this curious confessional irresistibly invited, from both its patrons, the

narration of those small perplexities and disappointments that may be inseparable from a honeymoon, but that, candidly, do not sound well in a "lovers' diary." But with the red books, as with all other human institutions, the original intention is often difficult to keep in view.

The really startling thing, however, was not that the inscriptions in the red books were of the tenor that has been indicated, but that they were of such frequency and eloquence. Neither Rose nor Henry Hugh had ever kept a diary before. Yet so regularly—and withal, alas, so secretly—did they now yield to the constantly increasing fascination of their mute confidants, that before a week was over both books already began to show signs of wear, and Rose even wondered if hers would last until she should return.

Meanwhile, both complimented themselves upon their devotion to their future domestic happiness; as though this much-anticipated felicity were a mathematical problem to be solved only at the cost of much time and ink and paper.

By the time the pair reached Quebec, Rose had grasped the principle on which Henry thought a bridal journey should be conducted, and she was quite as zealous as he in enumerating points of interest and setting apart the hours that must be devoted to inspecting them. Henry, who was, at this stage of the journey, thoroughly aglow with patriotic fervor, was quick to note this tendency; and he is hardly to be blamed for promptly applauding the results of his own tutelage.

"I must write down in the red book, my dear," he remarked, with an attempt to be light and humorous, "that you are improving."

They had just come in from an early morning walk on Dufferin Terrace, and were sitting at breakfast in the Chateau Frontenac.

Rose flushed. It may be assumed that the nerve affected by this remark was already vibrating from previous comments.

"You have often told me, Henry," she reminded him, with an effort to be

gay, in her turn, "that you thought me quite perfect. Now I like to be thought perfect. Isn't it rather faint praise to be told, when we have been married only a week, that you think I am improving? Oh, Henry!"

"But you are!" uncomprehendingly insisted this well-meaning husband.

"I am not!" cried Rose, in a teary little spurt of unreasonableness. "I won't improve! I am quite everything that I should be. And if you won't tell me so now, who ever will? Why did you ever marry me?"

Dear, dear, here it had come already! Henry, having read of such things, recognized it immediately as a lovers' quarrel, and confessed to himself his desperate ignorance as to what to do. How did one treat hysterics in a wife? Was there anything in the red book—

Rose was not without a certain power of intuition.

"There it is!" she exclaimed. "The look in your eye! You always have it when you are getting ready to write in the red book! Henry, you shall not say anything about this in the red book! And I must, I must tell you that I cannot endure any longer that you should continually be writing things about me that I do not see!"

Rose herself was not aware how little this announcement was the result of impulse. With an interest painful and acute she had noted the increasing length of Henry's conferences with the red book. The desire to know the secrets of those pages had become overmastering. Henry, she knew, was not given to flattery. Yet in what other strain, she irrationally asked herself, should a newly-married man describe his wife, even to his diary? For fully three days this very human young woman had all unknowingly been poised for this very conflict.

"But, my dear Rose," temporized Henry Hugh, exceedingly perturbed, "what can have come over you? A few disjointed memoranda made at your instigation, and on the plan you yourself suggested, and for the benefit of us both? Why should you—"

"There is just one important point,



Henry," broke in Rose. "Will you let me see it?"

Poor Henry Hugh! He stumbled pitifully.

"But, my dear child," he pleaded with ineffectual duplicity, "the sentences are unintelligible, almost cryptic. You really *could* not read them!"

"Oh," groaned the wretched wife, "that was what I was afraid of—that you would be unwilling to show it to me! If you had not been writing unkind things, you would be glad to show the book! Oh, if Uncle Stephen——"

"Will you show me yours?" was Henry Hugh's sudden inspiration.

"But you do not want to see mine!" Rose weakened a little. "It is I who asks to see yours."

Henry Hugh was free from the wretched suspicions that tormented his unhappy young wife. He would not have dreamed that anybody, Rose least of all, could write or think anything uncomplimentary concerning him. And he was not, for any reason, particularly curious to read the converse of the lovers' diary. Nevertheless, this born statesman saw that he had made a good point.

"You are nervous over this matter, my dear," said he, with well-considered calm. "You wrong me very much in assuming that I have written anything that I should not wish you to read, but I will not be ungenerous. I will waive that. On the contrary, we will compromise. You shall show me your red book, Rose, my dear, and I will show you mine!"

"That will never do. I cannot!"

"Ah!" said Henry Hugh.

Rose was silent for a moment. She was quite vanquished.

"Henry," she said, forgetting the attitude she had resolved to maintain, "you know we always believed there

was something Machiavelian about Uncle Stephen, and I think he bewitched those books! Why did he ever give them to us? I am afraid of them now—afraid!"

"Afraid of some little books? An extraordinary notion," commented Henry Hugh.

"But see what they have brought about! We've had our first quarrel, and we've been keeping a horrid kind of secret diary that will do no good and will only hurt each other's feelings. I really knew all the time that we ought not to have secrets from each other, didn't you, Henry? Please tell me, do you care for me any less because of the red books?"

"My dear child," smiled Henry Hugh, with all the gentleness in the world, "it is as if the red books had never been. They were, as you say, a dangerous absurdity."

Rose drew a long breath.

"I can't help feeling," she said, "that we've had a narrow escape. Don't you think we ought to celebrate it?"

"By all means," said Henry Hugh, interestedly. "Shall we visit the cathedral?"

"Yes," dutifully agreed Rose. "That will be nice. And we can promise, too, never to have secrets from each other again. And we can—that is—do you mind if we burn the red books, Henry? Do you think it would be, well, not nice to Uncle Stephen?"

"Confound Uncle Stephen!" declared Henry Hugh, with animation. "We will burn them directly we get upstairs."

Nor was any holocaust ever more relentlessly performed than that which concluded the episode of the little red books and restored peace and understanding to this sadly imperiled honeymoon.



# The Second Childhood of Ethelberta

By M. H. Vorse

## I.



WELL, Ethelberta," said Mrs. Gregory. "Well, Ethelberta, my dear child, I'm delighted you've come. And the dear babies! Kiss your old Aunt Emily, my darlings. To think of your having babies, Ethelberta!" said Mrs. Gregory, half reproachfully.

"I suppose it was what one might have expected," said Ethelberta, flip-pantly. She flew to her aunt, and placed an ecstatic little kiss on her aunt's nose.

"Oh, Ethel," said Mrs. Gregory, almost tearfully, "no one has done that, no one has kissed my nose—since you went away."

Ethelberta laughed joyfully.

"I don't suppose middle-aged ladies often have their noses kissed—in New England, anyway," she replied.

"It's six years since you were here, do you realize that, my dear?" continued Mrs. Gregory.

"And glad enough you were to get me off your hands, poor Aunt Emily! I did lead you a dance."

"Well, not exactly a dance, Ethelberta," said the older lady, conscientiously, "and I was never glad to get you off my hands, but I felt that a college town wasn't the place for my dear sister's child."

"The dead and dying did rather strew the ground," said Ethelberta, with evident satisfaction.

"You've grown more mature since I last saw you," said Mrs. Gregory, scrutinizing her niece fondly.

"I suppose I have," said Ethelberta, indifferently. "But my nose hasn't. My

nose refuses to recognize the fact I have two children."

Indeed, Ethelberta's nose was distinctly *retroussé*. It gave her exquisite little face a piquant touch. But in spite of this she had that indefinable air of maturity which marriage and children give a woman; Ethelberta had the figure of youth, the buoyancy of youth, yet a discerning person would have guessed her twenty-eight years. Age was a thing that she had simply never considered. She took it for granted that she was very young. She felt so. She stared at her aunt in a species of wonder when Mrs. Gregory said: "There is not much society here for a woman of your age. I'm afraid you'll be dull."

"Oh, my dear," said Ethelberta, "it's so long since I've seen any boys that I'll enjoy playing with them. They're as much fun to play with, auntie, as a big family of pups."

A curious expression crossed Mrs. Gregory's face.

"You know," she said, "you're—you're rather old for college boys."

"Oh, don't be afraid I'll disgrace you again, you dear thing. I've gotten to be *that* discreet."

Mrs. Gregory shook her head. Ethelberta didn't understand.

"The social life in a little town, you know," she persisted, "is restricted. A girl enters the set of old fogies, of chaperons, as soon as she is married."

"Oh, I know," cried Ethelberta, "faculty parties—teas—and horrid tutors. No, dear auntie, please excuse me. A good-looking boy, even if undeveloped as to intelligence, for me every time. I remember those other parties," and Ethelberta gave a little shiver. "You

transparent old thing! You want to have me rehabilitate myself in the eyes of your friends. Well, I'll do anything you like," Ethelberta pecked her aunt's nose again, "but between times, if I'll be good and not make a noise, I may play with little boys, mayn't I? Tell uncle to bring me some nice ones."

Mrs. Gregory saw it was hopeless. Ethelberta had failed to realize what her aunt had tried delicately to convey to her, and that was that as far as college boys went she was old—only a degree younger than Mrs. Gregory herself. "Well," she thought to herself, with New England austerity, "it will mean discipline to Ethelberta." Aloud she added:

"I'm to be patroness of a dance tomorrow night, and of course I've arranged for you to come with me. Then you can pick out your boys to suit yourself," she added, with a spice of malice.

"Oh! what fun," crowed Ethelberta. "I'll feel as though I'd renewed my youth. I'm just in the mood to dance my feet off. College boys—I think I like the light ones, but—I'll just pick out a few blonds for myself tomorrow!"

"You're incorrigible," smiled Mrs. Gregory, but there was a shade of anxiety in her voice. Ethelberta had been a belle, as one only can be these days in a college town. She evidently expected to pick up her success where she had left it, and play with it.

"Discipline is a good thing," repeated Mrs. Gregory to herself.

## II.

"How young they look," said Ethelberta, as she and her aunt went up to the dressing room. A group of fluffy girls were putting powder on their sunburned noses, and giggling over it.

"Here, give me some of your white-wash," called a girl across the room. "My neck's a sight. Yes, Annette, rub it in well— Oh, never mind me, better no skin than two by four freckles."

A pretty little blonde in pink was sitting on the floor fitting her slipper over a pink silk stocking.

"Try a heavy necklace, Rosalie," she called, lifting up a heavy chain. There was an even line of tan that divided her neck neatly from her white shoulders. "Then you won't look as if you'd happened to put on the wrong head by mistake."

Ethelberta looked about her curiously. They seemed a different race of girls from the pale and anaemic ones she remembered to have known. These were "husky," somewhat slangy in their ways, but with a certain boyish grace. Several she recognized as having seen in the nursery. There was only one girl of her own set. This was a girl a bit younger than Ethelberta, who had married a young professor. She looked fresh and wholesome, but there was a deadly settled expression about her. She greeted Ethelberta pleasantly.

"What are you going to do to amuse yourself this evening?" she asked.

"Oh," said Ethelberta, "I'm going to dance."

"Is your husband here?" asked the other, with a suspicion of grimness.

"Oh! he wouldn't care—" began Ethelberta. "The cat," she finished to herself, "she means no one else will ask me." For the first time a little uneasiness flitted through her mind.

After the chaperons had been received elaborately by the boys and were comfortably ensconced, Ethelberta observed that they were being looked after by a sort of system, two boys talked to the six ladies perfunctorily, brought them lemonade, and offered to fan them until they were relieved by two other boys. "Just like the sentries. I wonder our guards don't go off goose-step," Ethelberta reflected.

Each two were introduced to Ethelberta by her aunt, but no one asked her to dance. After about five dances Ethelberta began to grow desperate. The floor was good, the boys danced beautifully, the music very nice, and no one asked her to dance! The terrible shame that only the wallflower knows, began to creep over her. She felt that a nightmare had come true. As a young girl she had often frightened herself by the awful question: "What if no one should

ask me to dance?" She had lain awake nights picturing the hideous sight of Ethelberta partnerless, against the wall. Now it had come true.

She grew quite appealing when the boys were introduced, and threw out little transparent hints, as she had seen wallflowers do, and she had laughed at them for doing it. No one asked her to dance. She sat with a pink flush in her face, making no pretense of keeping up a conversation with the other patronesses, who would talk about her children to her. Oh, she thought, if only she could hide herself somewhere where no one need witness the shame of Ethelberta, the wallflower.

Then an awful thought flashed into her mind. "It's because I'm *old*. I've grown old. Nobody wants to look at me."

And in the middle of this hideous revelation a well-known voice said:

"Why, Ethelberta—Mrs. Patterson, I mean. How do you do? I'm so glad to see you. May I have this dance?"

It was an old friend of Ethelberta's, Charlie Carleton, now a tutor in the college.

As she whirled past the mirror Ethelberta looked at herself. She expected to see herself old and withered. It surprised her to see she looked as usual. The next round she compared herself with the other reflections in the glass. "I *am* old beside them," she decided. The third round, a little impertinent smile appeared around the corner of her mouth. "I *won't* be old," she concluded.

"I don't know any boys. Have me meet some," she commanded her old friend. "That nice-looking dark one will do to begin with."

Ethelberta danced deliciously, and Willis Howard had come late and had few dances engaged. They sat on the piazza under the Japanese lantern. The old college patter came back to Ethelberta. She tried to be amusing, she coquetted; she tried harder to please this dark-haired lad than she had ever tried to please anyone. She was fighting for youth. Willis Howard got some of the other men and introduced them to Miss Patterson. Ethelberta danced every

dance, most of them with Willis, and from time to time she vanished on the piazza. She spoke to her aunt once or twice, but appeared no more among the chaperons.

"Your neice does not seem to have changed much," one of the ladies remarked, gloomily, to Mrs. Gregory.

The evening waxed late. Willis Howard and Ethelberta sat in the darkest corner of the piazza.

"Before I promise to go to walk with you," said Ethelberta, "I have something to confess. Perhaps you will not want to go then." Her face wore an expression of sadness doubly pathetic, for Ethelberta's mouth seemed made only for smiles.

Willis waited expectant. He had made up his mind about the walk, as the little fraud beside him knew.

"My name isn't what you think——"

"I think it's Miss Ethelberta Patterson," interrupted Willis.

"It's—Mrs. Franklin Patterson," faltered Ethelberta. "I'm married."

"I shall call you Ethelberta, then," said Willis. It was not for nothing that he had danced five dances and sat out four with Mrs. Patterson.

"I'm years older than you," reprovved Ethelberta. Youth was fast returning to her.

"You must have been married as a mere child," returned Willis, with a note of tenderness in his voice.

"I was," said Ethelberta, pathetically. Then, as if determined he should know the worst, she added, in a tragic tone: "I've two children of my own."

"Your aunt is looking for you, Miss Patterson." It was Carleton again.

"To-morrow at nine," said Willis.

"I had heard you'd matured, Ethelberta," said Carleton, teasingly.

"I will *not* be a chaperon. I'm not a hundred and twenty-eight yet," flashed Ethelberta.

"No, you're not that—you're more than that—you're married," said Carleton. "You don't know how old a woman is in a college town."

The next morning Ethelberta kept Willis waiting half an hour, while she altered the sleeves of a guileless muslin

she had worn before she was married. She put guileless blue ribbons at her neck and belt, and a great shade hat.

"Little Ethel, the child-wife, is going to walk with Mr. Howard, auntie," she announced. She looked extremely young, a little bit too much gotten up to look young, Mrs. Gregory thought. Ethelberta kissed her babies good-by. They were charming little objects, with rose-leaf complexions and *retroussé* noses like their mother's.

"Aren't they becoming to me," she coquetted at Willis, as she held them tight in her arms. Ethelberta out of doors was at her best. She had a gay insouciance that gave her the atmosphere of a little *mondain* wood nymph."

"Let's play we're ten, it's such a young day," she said, and Mrs. Gregory shook her head, as she watched them race down the hill.

### III.

"No," said Ethelberta, cocking her head on one side, "you can't come to-morrow. I'm busy. I have my children to think of." Willis started, he had forgotten the children.

"But I must come to-morrow. Please."

"No," said Ethelberta. "Well, to-morrow evening, after they're in bed—for a little while."

"I'll tell Aunt Emily to stay by, this is too silly," said she to herself.

During the day Ethelberta helped her aunt pour tea for the freshmen. They treated her with respect, not to say awe, and one chatty one had chosen his sister's children as an appropriate topic of conversation. "The little beast," fumed Ethelberta. Again that terrible feeling of age stole over her.

She was grateful to Willis for not acting as if she were superannuated. He enveloped her in an atmosphere of admiration.

Next day when he called, Ethelberta was out driving, and the next day she spent at the geology professor's house, and met many boys, who let her talk with tutors. So when she found a note waiting for her, saying: "Dear Ethel-

berta Patterson: When can I see you again?" she answered: "To-morrow."

Her aunt surveyed this flirtation with disapproval.

"You're quite old enough to know better," she scolded.

"Oh, but I'm proving to myself that I'm not."

"I'm sure Frank doesn't let you act like this," persisted Mrs. Gregory.

"I don't *have* to act this way," explained Ethelberta. "In the city everyone's the same age. Willis is my fountain of youth."

All went well for a few days. They were sitting by the side of the road resting before they climbed the hill towards home.

"Do you know, you are different from anyone I've ever known," said Willis.

"Yes?" said Ethelberta.

"You're—you're *so* different—you don't get all hot riding a wheel. You don't go racing around golf links. You've got the charm of the women one reads about in books."

"In other words, I belong to a different generation," thought Ethelberta.

"There's a flavor about you that girls don't have now," pursued Willis, dreamily.

"Oh, say I remind you of the smell of lavender, and be done with it," thought Ethelberta.

"You're so delicate and dainty," Willis continued.

"I suppose I must seem—simply *rococo* to anyone brought up with these beefy, athletic girls," thought Ethelberta.

"It's time to go home," she said, abruptly. All the way up the hill her mouth had that pathetic droop that Willis had gotten to know so well. In reality, it meant that Ethelberta was bored or annoyed, or it might mean she was tired, or she simply looked pathetic to get sympathy.

"When in doubt look pathetic," was Ethelberta's rule in life. Even after six years it still took in Ethelberta's husband.

At sight of it, Willis was sunk into deep gloom. He had his own opinion of the origin of that sad look. Visions

of brutal husbands flitted through his mind. Ethelberta dismissed him curtly. "I feel very old to-night and tired," she told Mrs. Gregory. "My clothes smell like old lavender, and I have the Dresden china air of a Louis XV. marriage!"

"Your age has apparently not given you much discretion," commented Mrs. Gregory.

"Yes, I'm glad Frank hasn't second sight," answered Ethelberta, as she sat down to write a long and affectionate letter to her husband, which made no mention of Willis.

By the time Ethelberta had been there ten days she noticed a change in the attitude of the boys. They looked at her on the street. They asked to meet her. Willis Howard was an important man, and it had been rumored that a married woman had "bowled him over." No one ever had affairs with married women. Willis had tried hard at first not to look devilish. But there was a man-of-the-world air about him, which his chum had found hard to bear, and when he refused to go boating with some girls on the river, observing to his chum: "I really can't stand the young persons, you know," Conrad almost choked with rage. But this cocky air vanished speedily.

"I believe the old boy's hit hard," Conrad commented, as he watched Willis' dejected figure creep down toward the Gregorys.

Nothing bored Ethelberta like ill temper and morbid moods; for three days Willis had had a grouch. He had looked at Ethelberta with hungry brown eyes. She felt justly aggrieved.

Now, in spite of her gayety, he sat glum and silent.

"What is the matter, Willis?" she said. "You've been gloomy for days."

"I've been gloomy ever since I met you," said Willis.

Ethelberta changed the subject abruptly. That sickening feeling of age stole across her. She looked off into space, her mouth unconsciously took on its pathetic droop.

The light from the piazza lamp shed

a soft luster on her blond hair, and emphasized her sad look.

"Don't look like that, Ethel," exclaimed Willis, "I can't stand it. It's bad enough to be unhappy myself—but you— Oh, I know what your life must have been— You've tried to hide it from me, but you can't!"

"I don't know what you mean," said Ethelberta, amazed.

"Oh, yes, you do, Ethel," he cried. "You know I love you. Get a divorce. Oh, Ethel, Ethel! I love you—Ethel."

Ethelberta slipped through life easily, a difficult situation saw only her little heels departing swiftly in the distance.

"Good-night, Willis," she gasped, "I shall never see you again," and Willis heard the door of the house bang behind her.

"I saw him try to kiss you," said Mrs. Gregory, accusingly.

Ethelberta sat holding her head in her hands, with an air of real tragedy.

"He did," she answered, in a dull voice, "and it made me feel two hundred. When that poor little boy sat there making his calf love to me, two hundred, Aunt Emily, I felt."

"You have no conscience about how you made him feel, I suppose," said her aunt, with some asperity.

"Oh, fiddlesticks! Aunt Emily," exclaimed Ethelberta, "I've *formed* him, that's what the influence of an older woman always does."

Next day a train took one young matron with a *retroussé* nose, two adorable children and one nurse—the nurse would have told you—to New York.

To Ethelberta the destination was Youth.

"It wasn't my fault," said Ethelberta, comfortably shifting the responsibility. "That town put me in my second childhood. And when he tried to kiss me, Frank, I was quite as shocked as you are," she told her husband with dignity.

"You will never grow up, I suppose," scolded Frank Patterson with disgust. "you act as if you were two years old. If I ever catch that impudent pup I'll break his neck!"

Ethelberta dimpled. It was good to be called two years old.



# The Taming of a Recalcitrant

By Fletcher Cowan

## I.



HERE are certain bachelors whom people speak of as "too self-contained to ever marry."

I remember the time when this aspersion was leveled at myself.

I had always been a believer in the "quiet life," by which is meant not the slightest disparagement of marriage. By the "quiet life," I mean not the monastic but the kindredly passive existence that acknowledges in its hour of solitude, before a comfortable evening fire, the charm of women for other men, and the supremacy of a book and pipe and toddy for one's self.

One evening I had retired to my room as usual, when a knock came to my door. Thinking it meant the postscript kiss of an ultra-fond parent, I concealed the toddy and admitted Barclay, whom I had not seen for some time past.

I rather liked Barclay. He was one of those fellows, who excel only in those things you care nothing whatever about. He was a past master of every social fad existent, an exquisite dresser, and in conversation was given to such neutral values of thought that I could always think of something else while he was talking to me. I remember him as being particularly delightful in his own home.

He apologized for the lateness of the call, and, seating himself comfortably, gave an explosive laugh, and said with considerable relish:

"I met your mother, Lyndhurst. She told me to come up and get you away from these horrid books that she and

Dora are so jealous of. And what do you suppose Dora said? 'Oh, Mr. Barclay, *do* take him out at night. Take him to the club—to one of the receptions, where he will meet a pretty woman, and perhaps some day he may bring home a wife that mother and I will be able to find fault with!'"

I resurrected the toddy, duplicated it, and was just considering whether I should invite Barclay to join me in it, or toss it in his face, when I saw him suddenly sit bolt upright, staring, at an angle that appeared to coincide with the cornice of the room, behind me.

I turned to trace his line of vision. He was looking at a panel, on which was inscribed, in antique characters of red and gold, this legend:

"Here, with a Loaf of Bread beneath the  
Bough,  
A Flask of Wine, a Book of Verse, and  
Thou  
Beside me, singing in the Wilderness."

"Who is she?" he exclaimed.

"Who are you talking about?"

"The 'Thou'—the creature who is doing solfeggios beside you in the wilderness?"

I smiled at his earnestness.

"She comes of a large family, Barclay. She is one of nine sisters. It's rather difficult to name her, fixedly. One time she's Thalia, another time Melpomene. Sometimes Erato, sometimes Calliope."

"Odd names. Are they Boston girls?"

"Pretty nearly. They live on top of a mountain called Parnassus—a suburb of Boston."

"But—you like one of these sisters better than another?" he ventured.

"Erato, probably."

He shied at the name like a horse.

"Why don't you marry her?"

"Can't."

"Husband in the way?"

"No."

"And she can't be married?"

"That is the reason I am so perpetually in love with her. I reach out to her constantly, trembling with hunger for the touch of her, and just as constantly she evades me—leads me on with the temptation of her elusive graces to nothing, yet to all!"

"Rot!" cried Barclay. "Do you think I'd take a woman out to supper who led me a dance of that kind?"

"Another beautiful point about the lady—you don't have to take her out to supper. She lives upon such things as dreams are made of."

"Lyndhurst, I believe you are going crazy."

"On the contrary, I am at present at the very pinnacle of sanity. You, my mother, my sister, would have me marry—waste my life on some pretty tailor-made creature, with the innocent face of a doll, and moods and whims to rack my soul to shreds. No, thank you! Listen. I've been a lover since I was fifteen and first became acquainted with 'Endymion.'"

"Then Erato is not your first?"

"She is all of them, or where she is not, she divides the honors with her queenly sisters. Ah, when I think of it—the women I have loved! From Andromache to Lucretia—Imogen to Elaine—Althea down to lovely Mary Morison!"

"What a devil of a fellow you must have been!" gasped Barclay.

"You do not understand. Can't you see that I am in love with the spirit of woman, rather than her material self?"

"Wait until you run up against the real thing," cried Barclay. "And I've got it for you, right downstairs, now."

"What do you mean?"

"I've brought it along with me."

"Brought what?" I asked. It was my turn to be dumfounded.

"The real thing—the real woman. She's down in the library now, talking to your mother and sister. You've heard of Miss Rutherford?"

Yes. I had heard of Miss Rutherford as one of the recent additions to the Colony. Her father had purchased Sunset Hall. I had not met her.

"What is Miss Rutherford doing here?" I asked.

"We stopped in together on our way from the club. I'm seeing her home," said Barclay. "We're getting up a fair at the club for charity, don't you know. Miss Rutherford is in for it, heart and soul. Full of fresh ideas; bossing the woman end of the affair. Got to settle on the men's committee. Fresh ideas wanted in that. Stirring up the dead wood. Come to you, who have been nothing but an empty due-paying automaton for years. Consider, Lyndhurst, a man like yourself, with Miss Rutherford, working hand-in-hand to make this whole affair a glorious success, the proceeds going to a hospital. Glorious woman—glorious man—glorious object in common—and, who knows—perhaps, glorious marriage later on, because she's perfectly irresistible, I can assure you."

My friend had forgotten, for the moment, his cultivated manner of social apathy and worked himself into what, for him, was almost a strain of enthusiasm. I was about to reply, when he commenced again, this time seizing me by my lapels.

"Look here, Lyndy!" he cried, determinedly, "there's a bond of fellowship between old comrades that you have not lived up to. I married, thinking you were going to do the same, but you fainted and didn't. That was a beastly trick you played on me, and I've never forgiven you for it. Now, misery loves company, Lyndy, especially in the suburbs, and you've got to marry, do you understand? And you've got to marry the woman who is downstairs. I've been looking for years for the proper kind of a woman to pull you into the shuffle, and, at last, I think I've got her. She has brains, beauty, and social position. Marriage will humanize you.

Marriage will take you out of this den of books and things that I can't understand; it will pull down your aristocracy of intellect, take you out on the links, and make you one with me and the rest of the boys!"

"But, Barclay," I protested, quietly, "I have a preference for the other ladies. I very much doubt whether a woman like Miss Rutherford could compensate me for the loss of their friendship. You are putting a heavy handicap on any mortal woman when you place her in competition with Juliet or Iseult."

"You call a love of this kind elevating," blurted Barclay, as he rose to go. "I'll bet you a quart bottle, Lyndy, that half the women you have mentioned weren't respectable!"

I stepped out into the corridor, almost immediately after him, fearing that it would look inhospitable if I did not see him to the stair at least. But I drew back at the sound of voices, down below, full of the energetic cross-fire that precedes a parting between women.

"Are you ready, Mr. Barclay?" said a voice, as Barclay reached the foot of the stair, and as she turned, with Dora's arm about her waist, under the light of the turk-lamp, I saw her face! I drew back farther, fearing I should be seen, and finally re-entered my room.

That night I sat before the fire and nused and smoked while I watched the coal pictures. I did not take up the heroines of poetry. Instead, I settled once and for all the question of Miss Rutherford.

"Fine looking—certainly," I said, "but—mortal," which I did not consider uncomplimentary to Miss Rutherford, seeing that it had taken me several hours to arrive at that conclusion.

## II.

"Now, why," I wondered to myself, the following morning, "why should a face—a voice—leave such an impression, and especially on such an unsusceptible person as myself? She is beautiful, truly. But so are countless others. She has a pleasing voice, but is that not a quality purely physical? Indeed, has

there not been many an angelic woman born without a voice at all? And are not women even more angelic for the lack of one?"

It was a glorious morning. Never had I seen the country look more beautiful. In fact, never before had I seen that part of the country look beautiful at all. We were certainly having a remarkable spring. In a day, nature appeared to have been affected by some extraordinary stimulus, and was really well worth looking at. And never before had I felt so much like being by myself; just giving myself up to the enjoyment of it all. Yet, these are the moments when a man finds out how thoroughly difficult it is to be alone.

Arriving in the city, I found many considerations to occupy my attention. At luncheon hour I broke away and entered a restaurant. It was alive with friends! I turned out again, and at every street corner I collided with a familiar face. Where, where on earth, I murmured to myself, is there a spot that a man can go off to quietly, without fear of interruption, and become acquainted with himself? Finally I found myself smoking a cigar on one of the benches in an adjacent park. There I looked up at the moving filigree of the trees against the sky, listened to the sparrows, and watched the children play about the fountain. And yet, myself and I became no better acquainted. That night I took the train back home with a strange misgiving. When I alighted at the station Dora came fluttering toward me along the platform and greeted me most effusively. This was a thing that Dora seldom did. I took it at once to be an ominous sign.

"Arthur," she said, excitedly, "I'm with Miss Rutherford! She's in the trap," pointing back toward the carriage line, "waiting for her father, who comes in on this train."

"I beg pardon," I answered, with a far-away look in the opposite direction, "but—who is—Miss Rutherford?"

"Oh, there's her father now!" cried Dora, suddenly, and she left me. But before I could get away by myself she returned and captured me. "Come, Ar-

thur, I want to introduce you. Miss Rutherford is holding the horses. She drives splendidly. Think! We met each other for the first time only last evening, and we've been together all day, just like two silly schoolgirls."

I was introduced. Mr. Rutherford greeted me warmly. I found myself in the presence of a very distinguished-looking man, but it was not until I turned and faced his daughter that I appreciated the full excuse for his existence.

"Diana, this is my brother," Dora said.

Diana! My heart thrilled at the very mention of the name. Diana! One of the richest names in poetry. Beautiful she certainly was, and more than beautiful—subtly suggestive of temperament, which I believe had been considered, always, the most dangerous of qualities in a woman. No doubt, on acquaintance, she would reveal her limitations, I thought, but, on the whole, I felt that she would make an excellent friend for my sister.

I was also introduced to Miss Rutherford's Scotch terrier, which was barking at me on the platform, and, quite unmindful of the pertinence of a proverbial saying, I stooped to make friends with it, while Miss Rutherford, her father and Dora began to talk energetically, and all together, about who should and who shouldn't use the trap up the road.

Mr. Rutherford wanted the girls to use it so that he might walk with me. Dora wouldn't listen to the idea of displacing Mr. Rutherford, for whom the trap had been purposely brought down. I ventured no suggestion whatever, occupied as I was with the dog, and when the wheels began to move and I looked up, I stood alone on the platform with Miss Rutherford!

"I hope things have been arranged to your liking," Miss Rutherford said, with a laugh. "Dora wouldn't have father walk and father *would* have Dora ride; so I am afraid that you are left to take me to the hall."

We started off, with Raggles in the wake. As I look back on that beautiful

evening I see myself in full perspective as a recalcitrant brute. But how could I have helped it? At that time I was a brute. To have attempted to be anything else would have been an affectation.

The evening was delightful, and the walk up, under the maples, to the terrace road seems to me, now, the only one I ever had.

We arrived at the hall.

"Good-by, for the present," she said to me, with a smile. We were standing on the porch and she had removed her hat, revealing rich Grecian waves of hair. "Dora is to stay for tea, you know. You will call for her during the evening. Thank you, for promising to assist me at the fair."

I, of course, returned for Dora. And that night, while Mr. Rutherford had Dora under his fatherly wing in the billiard room, teaching her the theory of cushion caroms, Miss Rutherford and I talked for a while about the management of the fair. Then she played a little Chopin for me. Then she sang. And finally, at her suggestion, I mustered up sufficient temerity to sing, too, with apologies for my accompaniment.

### III.

It was not long before I discovered that Diana's charm lay almost wholly in her imperfections. I soon found out that she couldn't quote correctly at all. Almost invariably she would get facts twisted; get things only half right.

Of course, there were times when she set me a trifle straight, I admit; but, in the main, she revealed herself as a creature of emotions and impressions that, positively, bordered at times upon the merely human. Had she been perfect, perhaps I might not have liked her as well. Perhaps a latent egotism was appealed to here, and I liked her because she was a bit inferior to myself. Yet she was great and grand at that; so rich in girlish fancy; and when the woman's earnest part peeped out, she always talked on the grace side of common sense. But I had feared from the start that it was only a matter of time when

she would reveal her limitations, and reveal them she did.

It hurts me to write further about Diana—but write I must, because I know that if Diana ever chances to see this it will hurt her more than me. In the first place, I never liked the way Diana treated me about that fair. That she was afflicted with the charity mania, then so prevalent, is no excuse. The fact remains that, when I met her, I was rather interested in her and wished to do things and talk about things that were interesting to both of us; not looking necessarily toward any summary consummation of our friendship, but just for the simple pleasure of our being together. Then came the fair. Then came Diana's first display of authoritativeness. She actually ordered me about. She made me carry things; set up tables on saw-horses in a perfect barn of a building; get on a stepladder and stretch bunting from the rafters until my neck was almost dislocated; light lamps and soil my fingers with kerosene. At her home, she pressed me into making chrysanthemum rosettes out of colored paper to deck the bunting streamers; and it all ended, on the opening night of the fair, with my being appointed the high and mighty master of the lemonade stand, while Barclay and his gang of satirical dogs stood off and laughed until their sides ached.

While I was in Diana's presence I never resented anything. Everything, then, appeared to be my natural duty. But when I got home to my room and caught sight of my dear old books, that used to be my nightly company and now lay by neglected, the iron began to enter into my soul.

It goes without saying that the fair brought Diana and me closer together than we might otherwise have come. I know now what I didn't quite know then, that when a woman begins to order you about it means a lot. She has found her maverick and branded it. I soon began to feel myself smarting from the brand, but I will insist that I put up as brave a fight against Diana as any man well could, single-handed, against a woman.

Being imperfect, as she was, Diana lulled me into a false sense of security. I did not know that I was on the shoals. One evening I called at the hall, and, so sure as my name is Lyndhurst, when I left the house that night I had bound myself to be her husband!

When I awoke the next morning I had no clear idea of how it all had happened. Had I asked her, or had she asked me? Of course, the latter was impossible, for Diana's very aloofness, if anything, had tantalized me into doing what I had done. On general principles, however, before taking the train that morning, I walked up to the hall.

I found Diana, where I knew she would be, in the arbor on the lawn, writing letters.

"Why aren't you on your way to business?" she asked, looking up at me with the most practical look I had ever seen upon her face.

"I beg your pardon, Diana, but am I right in the remembrance—that is, did I ask you last night if you would be my wife?"

"Excuse me, please." Then, consulting her diary, she answered promptly: "Yes—you did."

"Thank you!" I answered, crushingly, referring, apparently, to my own memorandum book. "You are right. I find a similar note recorded here."

She rose and plucked a pendant of wistaria from the arbor lattice.

"Dear heart!" she cried, and threw it at me.

I picked it up, leaped on the terrace, and, entering the arbor, put my arms about her and kissed her.

"Now don't interrupt me!" she cried. "I'm at my letters and I'll miss the mail."

"But you are engaged to me," I said.

"I know it," she replied. "And I'm writing the news to everybody that I know. That's more important. So, go along."

And along I went.

As the day wore on I became impressed with the sense that something had happened. I was to be married! I had practically signed over my future into the hands of one woman; wiped

out my whole personality after years of careful cultivation, and made myself a thing to be born all over again, and born and fashioned according to the laws decreed by my *impératrice*. As I thought over the life that was gone, I remembered the song I had sung for her at the piano the first evening we spent together. It was Tosti's "Good-by, Summer," and now, bowed down without the gift of song, I felt the fullness of its significance.

I saw the forecast of the tyranny to come. The revulsion came in sweeps. I was shaken to the nerve centers. That very night when I got home there was a letter from Diana on the dining table. I must come to the hall at once. There were a hundred and one things she wanted to do. When I got to the hall, I found her in a high state of nervous excitement. She had written about fifty letters that day to as many friends, informing them of our engagement, while cautioning them all to keep it an inviolate secret, and was already planning the details for the wedding a year ahead.

"Diana!" I pleaded. "Why so precipitately business-like. Leisure, dear. Let's have a little love in this."

"Arthur," she said, "do you love me very much?"

"Of course I do," I faltered.

"Ever so much?"

"Ever," I answered, feeling like a sheep.

"You've thought of me, and only me, all the livelong day?"

"I've thought of you a lot!" I cried, with liberated feeling.

"Well, you know that little church up on the hill—the one all covered with ivy?"

"Yes."

"That's the church you are going to attend in future."

"But," I protested, "I have never attended any church."

"That's the church we are going to be married from."

"But——"

"And I want you to take a Bible class there, beginning next Sunday afternoon."

"But, Diana——"

"Arthur!" she said, sternly, and that settled it. The next Sunday I, who, the previous Sunday, had been reading Congreve and Wycherly, undertook a Bible class!

She at once took up the subject of her trousseau.

"Diana!" I appealed, "why this allegro movement? Adagio! adagio, my dear!"

But she paid no attention to me. It was "Go along!" or "You are interrupting me."

One evening I rebelled.

"Diana," I said, hotly, "I don't know what you want in yours, but I want a little romance in mine."

"What form of the romantic do you prefer?" she asked.

"We must dine in the city occasionally. We must go to the theater."

"Lovely!" she cried. "Let's go!" and we made an appointment for the very next evening.

Then I came face to face with the weakest spot in Diana's armor. She did not keep her appointment on time. Never once, in the history of our affairs, was Diana *there* on time! And never once, did she meet me with the blush of guilt for being in default—always, with the most exasperating smile of confidence.

Over the dinner her talk reverted, invariably, to two subjects—trousseau and "Do you love me?" At the theater, when the lights went down, before the curtain rose on the play, and the music began its preparatory tremolo, a quiver of ecstasy would go through her and she would whisper with a clutch at my arm: "You are sure you love me?" And after the play, when I had wraps to see to at the cloak room, and the quickest modes of transportation to consider in order to catch the train back home, with all the other responsibilities that are thrown upon an escort, she would clutch me again, amid the crush of people, cars and carriages, and drive me frantic by whispering, "You are *very* sure you love me!" until at times I thought we both would be run over and end up in a hospital.



Whenever I went out with Diana she had a way of cramming my pockets full of things. First, there would be her white gloves; then her opera glasses; then her bonbonnière, with her delicately embroidered handkerchief about the size of a postage stamp. Sometimes, it would be several yards of that chiffon stuff that they usually wear about the neck, or her weather sandals, with her magazine; in fact, several magazines; and her ribbon purchases. To top it all, she had an inordinate liking for chest-nuts, with which she would frequently have the fur-turbaned Italians at the street corners fill my pockets. She made me even carry "fudge" and Georgia peaches for her. In short, every time I went out with Diana I felt like a peripatetic catch-all, or a dromedary.

Not alone did Diana never keep her appointments on time, but she had a way of springing appointments on me when I didn't expect them, and breaking others that I had carefully prepared for. After our engagement—I refer here to our marriage engagement, the only one she never wantonly broke—there never was an evening on which I reached home without finding a note from Diana on the dining table marked "Immediate." I would open these notes with a start, of course expecting to find myself face to face with a matter of life and death, and, instead, would be confronted by a hastily written line which read somewhat like this:

"A thousand kisses, and *can* you come up to-night, and *did* you remember about the shoe-dressing?"

This sort of thing, of course, gave me no opportunity whatever of getting back to my books, and I soon began to feel myself deteriorating intellectually.

But the crowning blow was yet reserved for me, and in due time it came.

Diana had a way of forgetting things, especially her personal chattels. We had spent the evening at the theater. The dinner, before the play, had been superb, marred only by Diana's theft of a souvenir spoon. As for the play itself, we sat it out, which meant that, as plays go, it was pretty good. We finally reached the train, and it was just pull-

ing out when Diana clapped her hand to her heart and gave a gasp.

"My darling," I cried, jumping to my feet, "are you in pain?"

"My watch!" she cried. Then, instantly. "Never mind, I remember, now; I left it at the watchmaker's."

Then she felt about her and gently harpooned my overcoat pockets with her fingers.

"Have you my fan, dear?"

"Yes."

"And the program?"

"Yes."

"I think one of my shoes is untied."

At the risk of vertigo, I laced it.

"Isn't one of my side-combs missing?"

"No."

"Where are the cream peppermints?"

"Here."

"Are you sure that——"

"I am sure of everything!" I answered, with infallible emphasis.

"I meant to ask you," she said, turning the subject with her usual adroitness, "if you were sure you had a cigar to smoke going *up* the road from the station!"

I was mollified.

We reached home, and at the hall the most fervent thing that she could say to me at parting was that she felt certain something had been forgotten.

Nor had I long to wait before I discovered that something had been forgotten. Promptly at rooster-crow, there came a banging of the knocker at our door. It was Christopher, man at Sunset Hall. I must go up to the hall at once. This time I felt sure there must be something really the matter with Diana's heart. Posthaste I went. Diana was at her window, in the early dawn, looking as beautiful as Juliet.

"The muff!" she cried to me, frantically, from above. "The muff!"

"Where did you leave it?" I called up, with a sinking sensation that the day's work was cut out for me.

"I don't know," she answered, with a light in her eyes that I had never seen before on sea or land. "I haven't slept a wink for thinking about it. There is something in it that I value more than

life. Go, Arthur! If you love me, find it!"

And out into the world I went, albeit dawn, to find that muff. And this, without the slightest idea concerning the character of the muff; whether it was a fabric of sable, astrakhan or burlap.

I started for the theater as a forlorn hope, but, on my way, just to treat the matter with Napoleonic foresight, I inserted an advertisement in the newspapers:

"LOST.—A lady's muff. Lady values it more than life. Therefore, in all probability, an expensive one. If finder can prove that the muff he is returning is the right one, he will be liberally rewarded. Address X. Y., this office."

After a hard day's work there was now no resource left for me but the theater, and there I went, and ran up against the only velvet hour of the day. Eleven muffs had been forgotten there on the previous evening. I was commanded to give a definite description of mine. One thing I learned quickly at that box office. That was, that anything in the way of a stuttering or irresolute description never counts. Precise knowledge as to the character of a muff is not necessary, but personal force and blandishment is. Before the people behind the wicket discovered the spell that I threw about them, they had shown me those eleven muffs, and one of them, the finest, appealed to me so instantly as possessing the quality of an old friend that I knew it was Diana's. So I marched away with it, triumphantly—a splendid compensation for my day's work; but not before I overheard a lady inquire at the window, immediately after, for the very same thing, and heard the man behind the wicket answer, witheringly: "Nothing such as you speak of here to-day, madam."

I, too, turned a gaze of flint upon her, and, hugging my hard-earned trophy to my heart, I made at once for home, and there received the hardest blow Diana ever dealt me.

The usual note marked "Immediate" was at my place on the dining table. It read:

"HEART OF MY HEART: Don't bother about the muff. Found it on the piano. Didn't have it with me. Isn't that funny? We've all laughed so. Come up when you have time.  
DIANA."

I dropped into a chair, for a moment stunned. Then I looked at the muff I had brought home. She—Diana—had been the means of making me a common thief! I would never forgive her for it—never. Things between us must come to an end and at once. I went to my room to determine how this could be most effectually accomplished. Diana, of course, would never listen to the breaking of our engagement. I knew that. It would kill her, and I did not wish to be the instrument of any such summary vengeance. I could not run away and leave her. That would be cowardly, and prospects in the Klondike were uncertain. One thing was settled, the maddening infirmities of her character must be corrected with a whip-hand. I would, at once, put the chasm of marriage between us! I sat down and wrote her as follows:

"DIANA: Without giving you any reason for my sudden and arbitrary action in the matter, I hereby respectfully request you to be in readiness to marry me one month from date instead of six.

"P.S.—I also demand to know what there was in that muff that you valued more than life.  
ARTHUR."

After I had sent the letter I had a fear.

Suppose she should refuse to marry me at all, because of my arbitrariness.

Her reply was:

"DEAR MASTER: On the Shakespeare calendar, to-day, the quotation reads:

"O! it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant."

"I accept your terms. Meekly,  
"DIANA."

"P.S.—What made the muff of priceless value was a lock of brown hair tucked away inside of it. And I hope you will not feel jealous when I tell you that I value it even quite as much as yourself. So, there!"

And thus it came to pass that Diana and I were married.

# The Waning Dramatic Season

By Alan Dale



**E**XACTLY why each waning season declines to wane without the aid of that curious phenomenon known as the "trial matinée" nobody really knows.

But just as soon as the flowers begin to bloom in the spring the "trial matinée" crops up. It is a strange psychological freak. You have been through a hard season; you have waded through a plethora of comedy, drama, farce, melodrama, comic opera and un-comic opera. Perhaps you feel a trifle faint, and your thoughts run to the sea, or to the mountains, or to nature's open spaces; but there is the "trial matinée"—with the accent on the "trial"—looming up before you. Yours not to reason why.

The non-theatrical person would think that at the beginning of the season, when hope ran high and aspiration flourished, these little experiments would stand a better chance. But theatrical folks believe otherwise, and the "trial matinée" rarely occurs until the season limps on its last legs and the public has been completely satiated.

The principal "trial" during the present wane has been the Ibsen play entitled "The Pillars of Society." The very name of Ibsen seems to signify experiment. The Scandinavian dramatist feeds these sporadic matinées, and—superstitious though they assuredly are—theatrical managers do not hesitate to present Ibsen on Fridays. Most "star" actors would think twice, or thrice, before they ventured to appear in an ordinary play on the day that has the luck veto on it. In the case of Ibsen, however, they do not object. Perhaps they think that the "master" is so unlucky,

anyway, that an arch and simple Friday can be of no account.

"The Pillars of Society" is one of the easiest of the Ibsen plays—comparatively free from the cant about heredity and the usual Ibsen jargon. It is, as you probably know, a powerful, psychological study of an eminent gentleman in high social position, who stands on "trembling quicksands"; in other words, he has a past that he would willingly live down if Ibsen would allow him to do so. Three ladies are crowded into his life—one whom he has "wronged," another whom he has jilted, a third whom he has married.

It is melodrama, of course, though not the kind of melodrama that sports a tank, or a buzz-saw, or an infernal machine. There are some fine characters in the play, and as a model of stagecraft it is perfect. I unhesitatingly advise all the play-writing young men and women who make their own lives—to say nothing of mine—miserable, to study "The Pillars of Society," as one of the best specimens of dramatic "technique" to be bought in book form.

The performance in question, which took place at the Lyric Theater, with Mr. Wilton Lackaye as its "star," was shockingly mutilated. Lackaye is a sterling actor, and when I saw him in "The Pit" I ventured to think that he was lost in the vulgar conventionality of ordinary melodrama. After watching his work in "The Pillars of Society," however, I was irresistibly forced to the conclusion that Lackaye seemed unable to grasp the meaning of anything more than ordinary melodrama. He played *Consul Bernick* as though he were making a frenzied appeal to the gallery gods

of the Bowery. He made the mistake that even cleverer actors are unable to avoid.

I will not say that Ibsen, under any circumstances, is worth while worrying over. Still, if actors insist upon presenting his work they should realize that they must rid themselves of the ordinary tricks of the theater. Ibsen heroes and heroines (the terms seem absurd) must not clamor for the "sympathy of the audience"; they must be ready to be vivisected, and to let the public peep at the ugly workings of their inwardness; they must not strut, or pose, or gesticulate, or crave "scene calls," or behave themselves as though they were puppets in gallery plays of the caliber of "The Two Orphans" or "The Worst Woman in London." With these inclinations, they should avoid Ibsen as though he were a plague (and I'm not asserting that he isn't one).

Perhaps Mr. Bernard Shaw puts this better than I can do. (Bernard will thank me for the gracious condescension of this remark.) Of the ordinary actor in the Ibsen play he says: "He is constantly striving to get back to familiar ground by reducing his part to one of the stage types with which he is familiar, and which he has learned to present by rule of thumb. The more experienced he is, the more certain he is to de-Ibsenize the play into a melodrama or farcical comedy of the common sort."

Mr. Lackaye made an unwise move when he played *Consul Bernick*. He showed us his limitations—which we may have suspected, but didn't want to see. Personally, I'll confess that I didn't even suspect them, and this *matinée* was, for me, something of a blow. In addition to his shortcomings, Mr. Lackaye sported a beard that would have made the Sphinx laugh; and, furthermore, slipped up on his lines. It was a "trial" *matinée*, with a vengeance.

Another of these affairs was called "Love's Pilgrimage." It was used to exploit a clever young woman named Carlotta Nillson. Strangely enough, it was in the Ibsen play, "Hedda Gabler," that Miss Nillson made her metropolitan success. In the support of Mrs.

Fiske she made something of a sensation by a particularly artistic and exquisite piece of acting. One would think that such an artist—rare enough at any time, and nearly unique this season—would have been snapped away from the possibilities of the "trial *matinée*." Such, however, was not the case.

Young women, with not a tithe of Miss Nillson's ability and intelligence, have stalked through the comedies and dramas of the season with no obstacles in the path of their bovine placidity. This actress was forced to the wretchedness of an experimental afternoon in a play that proved to be the "limit" of endurance. It had for its author Mr. Horace B. Fry. Perhaps after the performance this playwright wondered why his patronymic had not been "Roast." "Fry" seemed inadequate.

It is not necessary to dally with the story of this sad affair, for it is not likely to be heard of again. It is pleasant, however, to record the fact that, even through the chaos of an insensate performance, Miss Nillson managed to shine. It was hard to realize that she was doing good work. With the uninitiated, the actor or actress sinks with the play. But the initiated justly appraised the value of Miss Nillson's efforts; and, though it is never quite safe to associate oneself with a fiasco, this young woman achieved her object.

Isn't it strange how that subtle something we call "temperament" (and I wish we didn't call it "temperament," for I despise the word) forces recognition? You know it intuitively. It is as though one soul spoke to another, as I believe that souls do speak, through telepathy. You see an actor or actress before you, with little to do and less to say; you wonder why you are involuntarily attracted, and that your attention hobbles away from the "star"; you find a small rôle suddenly elevated into importance, or a feebly-written sketch looming into prominence, and—and you ask yourself: why?

It is that luminous, etheric "something"—the subconscious, subliminal quality that defies analysis. I often notice it; it appeals to me; I flatter myself

that I can catch it; I wait for it. The lucky owner of this force invariably comes to the front, sooner or later. It is inevitable.

An amusing rivalry between a couple of *Camilles* has added a sort of sickly gayety to the fag end of the season. Dumas' tuberculous heroine, of the vivid past, and the tear-washed present, rarely fades entirely from view. The reason why? Well, the traditions of the stage have long ago announced that in *Mlle. Marguerite Gautier* the emotional actress finds her finest opportunities. Moreover, as *Marguerite* dies in the last act, in the center of the stage and a lace *peignoir*, the part appeals to the generality of "stars."

To-day the play seems wonderfully old-fashioned. So thoroughly has it been threshed out that its moral, or immoral, is no longer considered. The life, the love, the death of the courtesan are watched in a perfunctory sort of manner. Even the non-habitual theatergoer merely regards the acting in this case. In fact, some people go to see "*Camille*" in order to institute comparisons—a pastime of the weak-minded, in my opinion.

The "lady of the Camelias" to-day finds herself confronted with memories of Sarah Bernhardt, Eleonora Duse, Helena Modjeska and other histrionic celebrities who have shed a luster upon poor *Marguerite's* tubercles. The wonder is that the ordinary actress does not dread to rush in where angels might fear to tread. However, the "profession" is not diffident. There is probably no *Camille* who doesn't think that she could give pointers to Sarah, new wrinkles to Duse, and emotional suggestions to the whole series. Why, I've seen novices tackle *Camille* with a nonchalance almost indescribable.

This time it was Miss Margaret Anglin and Miss Virginia Harned who entered the arena, both actresses of intelligence and temperament. We all anticipated a treat in the case of Miss Anglin; the public seemed doubtful as to the prospects of Miss Harned. The wisecracks were wrong. Wisecracks frequently are.

It was Miss Harned who came, and saw, and conquered in the extreme end of Manhattan; to wit, the Harlem Opera House. Her appearance in "*Camille*" was a success; and, though she has rarely appealed to me as more than a "conscientious" actress, there was no getting away from the fact that her *Camille* was a capital and a convincing piece of work. It is waste of good powder and shot to mince matters about the heroine of the Dumas play. She was no lady. Obviously, to whitewash her in any way would be unpardonable.

Miss Harned used no whitewash—merely rice-powder to mark the ravages of tuberculosis. She played *Camille* for what that character was—or wasn't—worth. She boldly splashed on the gaudy colors in the first part of the piece, and then legitimately tried to move us, if she could, by the somewhat maudlin pathos of the ensuing episodes. And she succeeded. She held us. We saw a picture of grief-saturated woman, a study in hopeless anguish—in fine, a genuinely emotional piece of acting. It was not the Gallic *Camille*—nervous, highly strung, hectic and on wires. But it was the sort of agony that we understand in English, and it impressed us. Miss Harned may congratulate herself. She "won out" on her own lines—slavishly subservient to nobody; and that, in the case of the threadbare "*Camelia lady*," means much. I hate imitations—except from Fay Templeton.

Poor Miss Anglin came a sad cropper. She gave us a *Camille* who seemed more like a graduate from a young ladies' seminary than the woman with a cinematographic array of effulgent pasts. She was ingenuous as Priscilla, coy as the "maiden of blushing sixteen," girly-girly to the verge of desperation. It was quite impossible. Such a sweet creature could never have occupied that charming summer residence with *Armand Duval* as Dumas insists that she did. We looked for the wedding ring; we were horrified to find none.

The fact is, Miss Anglin not only failed, but failed through an apparent lack of intelligence. There is no law compelling any actress to play *Camille*,

though there might advantageously be one preventing her from doing so. If Miss Anglin hankered for the lachrymose *ingénue* she might have given us Pinero's old, yet pretty, "Sweet Lavender," which we should have liked, as we have not seen it for years. Why *Camille* as a "reluctant maiden"?

Henry Miller also made a mistake in playing *Armand*, who, if anything, was a stripling, with a stripling's lack of reasoning power. Now, I don't want to be rude, but Miller isn't a stripling, and doesn't look like one by about half his age. He certainly acted with much force and melodramatic fervor; he enjoyed himself, and took himself most seriously. But young William Courtenay, who was Miss Harned's *Armand*, was infinitely more plausible. This inane character, that seems to have nothing on earth to do but tie itself to the apron-strings of a particularly unlovely lady, should be played by a boyish actor, if at all.

After the production, and its melancholy end, Mr. Miller gave way to his outraged feelings. The Chicago and San Francisco critics had appreciated his efforts! I was glad to hear this. I like to know that an actor can get somebody to appreciate him. Unfortunately, however—I might almost say calamitously—the opinions of Chicago and San Francisco do not cut very much ice in this metropolis. We like our own judgment, even though it be wrong. Pig-headed, you will say. Perhaps. I will not attempt to champion the stubborn trend of the New York mind.

Just as I was putting aside my "*Camille*" records I received a coy little letter, begging me to view the work of a third "*Camelia lady*," at Proctor's Theater in One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street. I was assured that the last of the *Camilles* was undoubtedly the best, and threw the others into complete shade. However, I felt that, after all, no man can do more than his duty. I had accomplished mine, with a stoicism that needed no further support.

Miss Elizabeth Tyree came forward again, in an heroic endeavor to "star," this time at the Savoy Theater. This

young woman has, for many seasons, bloomed innocuously but pleasantly in various productions. She used to call herself "Bessie," and—and we used to think of her as "Bessie." But the frivolity of the abbreviation was evidently borne in upon her. For a year or two she has rigidly programmed herself as "Elizabeth," and now—she is a "star."

She secured a play called "*Heureuse*," by Hennequin and Milhaud, of Paris, and got the gentle Teutonic deodorizer, Mr. Leo Ditrichstein, of New York and Germany, to purify it for these States. It was called, in its new shape, "*Tit for Tat*," and told one of those exceedingly French stories that, in the original, must have been droll enough from the Parisian point of view, but that, in its adapted style, was "weary, stale, flat and unprofitable."

The American actress who, in cold blood, attempts to portray the flighty, shruggy, fidgety French moods that a *Réjane* alone thoroughly understands, must inevitably find that she is most egregiously in error. Miss Tyree is an agreeable, placid young woman, somewhat phlegmatic, assuredly self-conscious, uncursed by nerves, and blessed with a fair amount of self-possession. But the rôle that she was called upon to portray in "*Tit for Tat*" was several too many for her, and, of course, failed to make itself quite intelligible.

The part was not unlike the admirable leading rôle of "*Divorçons*." In fact, the play itself was not vastly dissimilar from the famous Sardou comedy. But what a waste of valuable time, and what a futile adaptation!

Unless there be something particularly witty, clever, brilliant or ingenious in these French stories of conjugal infidelity, there is no reason on earth why the American public should be inflicted with them. It is all very well to say that because Paris laughs at these conjugal complications New York must therefore do the same. The two capitals think differently—and may difference of opinion never alter friendship! In America we still own our old ideas on the subject of the relations of the sexes; we still prefer to cherish a few



illusions on the marriage question; we are not vividly interested in a "heroine" who has two lovers, and one husband, and no children; we are not wildly elated at the spectacle of a married woman coquettishly chirping "Cuckoo!" to a clandestine dear one.

Now, we all know that in Paris, popular literature, both on and off the stage, deals with one theme only. Ingenious though they be, French authors appear to devote themselves to wearisomely ringing the changes on that one eternal, unvarying question. This is perhaps correct, as far as Paris is concerned. French writers must know their Paris better than we do. My point is that it is foolish to bring this Paris to New York, with its essence eliminated. It is even unjust to Paris, for the adaptations seem so silly, and they are not quite the things that Paris enjoyed.

Managers rarely realize this until the rebellion of the public dots the i's and crosses the t's. At the Madison Square Theater, a few seasons ago, these unnecessary French farces (the youthful New York critic always calls them "Palais Royal," just to show that he knows "where we are") were unrolled before us in a series that seemed unending. They were all the same—each with a rakish and disgusting old husband, a "deceived" wife or two, an illicit "milliner," a variety actress, and a more or less ribald youngster. They got on our nerves. We grew almost morbid about them.

It was that delightful American farce writer, Augustus Thomas, who, with his excellent little play, "On the Quiet," proved that "America for Americans" was the most profitable policy. "On the Quiet," with its enormous success, killed French farce dead as a doornail.

"Tit for Tat," while not precisely farce, reeks so strongly of the Parisian idea that it was scarcely worth while putting forward. Ditrichstein is an energetic person, with a perfervid belief in the wisdom of foisting plays "from

the French" or "from the German" upon this American public. In this adaptation of "Heureuse," however, his work is by no means scintillant, and nothing but undiluted brilliancy could have saved the piece.

There is no reason why Miss Tyree should "star." Unlike the actor who once said to me: "My dear fellow, what's an actor to do who can't get an engagement? He is simply forced to star," this actress' services must surely be in mild demand. She has none of the emphatic qualities that the successful "star" needs. She is mild as milk, tender as butter, and quite lacking in authority. And to "star" in a Réjane rôle seemed like tempting fate. Miss Tyree is so essentially American!

The title, "Tit for Tat," causes one to wonder what Réjane herself would do if she were asked to illumine a positively American rôle. Can you imagine the Parisian actress, as an American woman, in a Clyde Fitch play? I can't. I don't suppose that wild buffaloes could drag her to such an ordeal. In fact, while American actresses are perfectly willing to appear in any foreign rôle that offers itself—whether they understand its significance or not—the foreign actress is not so foolish. And yet we all know that what is sauce for the goose is usually sauce for the gander.

In "Tit for Tat" Miss Tyree was aided by Ditrichstein himself, who is much better as an actor than he is as a playwright. Nevertheless, he was somewhat unsuited to the portrayal of a rôle entitled *André de Granville*. A *Herr Pumpernickel* would be far more calculated to put him at his ease.

One of these days the American stage will shake itself free from the French fetich and stand proudly "on its own." That day may be far distant; no efforts are made to hasten its advent. What always strikes me as ludicrous is that managers invariably try to land some foreign play dealing lightly with the theme of divorce.

Mr. Alan Dale's next article will treat on the Paris stage and the plays now appearing in the French capital, which may be produced in this country during the coming theatrical season. Mr. Dale, who is a broad for AINSLEE'S, will also contribute several articles on the recent London theatrical successes.—THE EDITORS.

# FOR BOOK LOVERS

SOME RECENT LITERARY SUCCESSES AND OTHER  
BOOKS WHICH ARE WORTH READING



THE old, old question as to whether or not fiction is deteriorating has been resurrected again, this time by a writer in an English review, who has been inspired by a recent biography of Charlotte Yonge. It seems to us to be a somewhat profitless subject for discussion, for it is one that will never be finally settled so long as the people who wish to write and talk about it are unwilling to bring themselves to some point of agreement upon a standard of comparison sufficiently comprehensive to produce conclusions that are approximately accurate and just:

Its interest, therefore, lies chiefly in the character and diversity of individual opinion that it provokes. And in this respect the views of Miss Jane Findlater in the *National Review* are important; they have the additional virtue of novelty.

The decadence of English fiction, as Miss Findlater has observed it, she attributes to the fact that "mere goodness is at a discount." Guy Morville, the "Heir of Redcliffe," with his virtues which, she admits, "are almost touchingly ridiculous," has been displaced by the energetic, forceful, progressive, successful man of affairs; and the "courtesan-heroine" has succeeded the domestic, home-loving and home-making woman.

That we meet few Guy Morvilles in twentieth-century fiction is doubtless true, and we are of the opinion that the disappearance of the lay figure in favor of the breathing man is evidence of im-

proved art and improved taste. And one can but wonder what kind of fiction Miss Findlater has been reading to justify her in depicting the modern heroine as "at heart a rake or worse."

But even if it were true that "mere goodness" is at a discount just now, what does it prove? Certainly the charge does not lie against modern fiction alone. There are few saints in Fielding and Smollett, or their contemporaries, and Thackeray, Dickens and George Eliot preferred real human nature, even with its frailties and failures; Scott and Hawthorne showed dislike of characterless impossibilities. As a matter of fact, it would be difficult to show any special predilection for "mere goodness" outside of the books of Miss Yonge, Miss Mulock and Rosa Nou-chette Carey.

But what is of vastly more importance in the world than "mere goodness" is the predominating influence of moral ideas upon the popular imagination, regulating tendencies in literature as well as in every other department of human activity. Lincoln's aphorism about fooling the people is as apt in its application to fiction as to politics, and critics, publishers and authors who pin their faith to the taste of the plain people show a wisdom that is not always credited to them by superior people.

As a matter of fact, the general average of English fiction was never higher or healthier than it is to-day; and even conceding that we can lay claim to no works of genius, yet it is safe to say that present conditions are such as to give promise of something of the sort

in the more or less immediate future. For technical skill in the art of novel writing is a very common accomplishment, and the impalpable something that bestows upon some books the gift of immortality occasionally gives such hints of its presence as denote a possibly early revelation.

While we are on this subject it may be worth while to notice the recent observation of a New York publisher who is a recognized authority. He says: "There was a time when we imported the bulk of our best fiction. Now we sell much more than we buy, and the change is due not so much to American business enterprise as to the amazing improvement in the quantity and quality of the American article.

"England has some novelists of splendid caliber, but the general level of her fiction is below ours. We turn out few big novels, but a great many readable ones."



"In the Bishop's Carriage," by Miriam Michelson, Bobbs-Merrill Company, is a series of stories recounting the adventures of a female Raffles. The first of them, which gives its name to the book, originally appeared as a short story in *AINSLIE'S*. Nance Olden, the heroine, is a particularly attractive young woman in spite of her reprehensible occupation, and is endowed with an unusual cleverness; though, indeed, she displays much more ingenuity in extricating herself from difficulties than in achieving success. In fact, her one notable success is in winning the favorable notice and finally the love of a theatrical manager whom she had attempted to rob. He recognizes her dramatic possibilities, puts her in the way of realizing them, and ends by marrying her.

The book is not altogether convincing as a story, but, for all that, there is realism enough in its pages to satisfy the most exacting. And, after all, if a novel has sufficient interest to keep the reader's attention engaged from the first chapter to the last, as this assuredly

does, he does not care much about the improbabilities of the plot. It is nearly as strong in its way as "Trilby" was, and deserves equal success.

Miss Michelson is too sophisticated a writer to be betrayed into writing a novel "with a purpose," but nevertheless there will probably be a good many people who will find a special significance in this book. Indeed, there are already rumors of a disturbance it has created in at least one well-known New York playhouse.

Her observations on theatrical matters are keen and audacious, and betray an intimate knowledge of the subject. In some cases she does not hesitate to use names of well-known people—with somewhat questionable taste, it must be confessed. In others the references are so thinly veiled that no mistake can be made as to who is meant. For instance, Nance Olden says of a notorious English lord and his actress wife: "Lord Harold Gray's a sure enough lord and she's his wife, but—but a chippy, just the same; that's what she is, in spite of the Gray emeralds and that great Gray rose diamond that she wears on the tiniest chain around her scraggy neck. He's got the family jewels, all right, to have as long as he lives. So he makes 'em make a living for him; and, as they can't go on and exhibit themselves, Lady Gray sports 'em and draws down two hundred dollars a week. Yep, two hundred."

Tausig, the theatrical manager, is put forward as the representative of the theatrical trust. He is the villain of the book, and is dealt with as a villain should be.



"Peace and the Vices," by Anna A. Rogers, Scribner's Sons, is a navy story, the purpose of which is obviously the glorification of war. Taking as a text Ruskin's dictum that "the common notion that peace and the virtues of civil life flourished together I found to be wholly untenable. Peace and the vices of civil life only flourish together," the author elaborates a theory that is hardly

flattering to the personnel of the navy. It would be interesting to know to what extent her conclusions are shared by naval officers; for, if they are generally accepted, the book has a peculiar significance.

Lieutenant Kent Fellowes, who is the hero, yields once too often to an inherited taste for liquor, and, in spite of an otherwise unimpeachable record for professional distinction and moral uprightness, is, through the efforts of a narrow-minded superior, court-martialed for conduct unbecoming an officer, found guilty, and suspended from duty. This sentence is, however, remitted on the outbreak of the Spanish war. His reinstatement and moral rehabilitation is attributed to the war, just as his downfall is attributed to the preceding years of peace. His friends, including his wife, Dora, her brother and sister, Jack and Adele Talty, and Dr. Robb, a naval surgeon in love with Adele, all stand by him with praiseworthy loyalty. They are all consistently lovable people, though Dr. Robb is, unfortunately, given to more or less prosy philosophizing.

If the reader can free his mind from the influence of the half-truth so characteristic of Ruskin, he will be likely to take solid enjoyment in the story, as a story; for, within these limitations, it is thoroughly commendable. It is manifestly written by one familiar with the ground, and is therefore convincing.



"Susannah and One Other," by E. Maria Albanesi, McClure, Phillips & Co., has a most unusual plot, but is, nevertheless, entirely plausible; the result, of course, is an extremely interesting story, and, withal, instructive in some of the queer crooks of human nature.

Susannah herself is a particularly attractive young woman, burdened with a cranky, invalid mother who is an incorrigible gambler, and a rather flighty married sister. The latter's moral eccentricities develop the plot and involve Susannah in a somewhat curious and

distressing complication with a young fellow, who, in spite of hints of the sowing of wild oats, turns out to be very much of a man. He and Susannah after a while find themselves in love with each other, much against their wills. When the sister discovers this her jealousy prompts her to attempt the defeat of the lovers' happy prospects by a very extraordinary and a very base lie. But the situation is saved, chiefly through the manly stand taken by the hero.

It is a well-told story, with some fine dramatic elements. Not a few of the more striking scenes produce an unwonted impression on the reader's emotions by the strong hold which Susannah's troubles take upon the sympathies. One, especially, is when Susannah is forced to accept the congratulations of her lover's aunt—a very lovable old lady—when the real facts justify rather the deepest commiseration. The book is one of a very few which we should think worth dramatizing.



"The Court of Sacharissa" is described as a "midsummer idyll compiled out of the traditions of the Irresponsible Club"; it is published by the Macmillan Company. Its authors, Hugh Sheringham and Nevill Meakin, have introduced us to some very charming people whose inconsequent doings and sayings furnish much the same kind of entertainment as do the queer creatures in "Alice in Wonderland." The only criticism to be made of the book is that there is just a little too much of it.

Of the Ambassador, the Poet, the Exotic, the Man of Truth, the Mime and the Scribe, the Exotic is the most interesting; and, naturally, as one may conclude from its title, the Man of Truth is a constant cause of embarrassment to the rest. Sacharissa is a very gracious and delightful young woman, who politely allows her sense of humor to cover her chronic condition of surprise at the performances of her friends.

The only disappointment one feels is that the Exotic never finishes his story of the Considerate Kurd, the Careful

Camel, the Placid Pasha and the Unscrupulous Circassian.



Another of Macmillan's books of somewhat the same type is Margaret Sherwood's "The Story of King Sylvain and Queen Aimée." We say of the same type, because it, also, might be called a summer idyll. It gives expression to the reaction that many of us feel at times from the too pressing demands and conventionalities of the strenuous life of courts and exchanges. It might, indeed, be considered another aspect of J. P. Mowbray's delightful story of "A Journey to Nature."

It is not, by any means, a novel idea that a king and queen should wish to take to the woods, but it is not often that we hear of royal personages who are sufficiently bold to do so. These two had the courage of their convictions, however, and, as it always turns out, they were amply repaid for their daring.



One of the best novels of the type which we have previously called "commercial" for want of a better name is "The Grafters," by Francis Lynde, published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company. It combines action, drama, fine characterization, local color, all in good proportion, to a degree that we have not observed in any previous book of its class.

David Kent, who is the hero, is described as energetic, resourceful, tenacious of purpose and, above all, close-mouthed. The last quality is, in our opinion, an evidence of the author's artistic cleverness, to use no stronger term; for, by sparing the reader the details of his hero's extraordinary achievements, he protects himself against the charge of dealing in impossibilities and absurdities.

The personnel and methods of the gang of official grafters who attempt to steal the railroad are most realistically drawn. One might guess, without going very wide of the mark, that some

phases of Montana politics have been described.

The only respect in which Kent disappoints us is his preference for Elinor Brentwood, rather than Portia Van Brock; for the latter seems to be much more the sort of woman to attract a man like David Kent.



Mary Johnston's new novel, "Sir Mortimer," published by Harpers, is a disappointment. After "Prisoners of Hope" and "To Have and To Hold," we were justified in expecting much better work than "Sir Mortimer"; instead of which we have one of the most commonplace of the historical type, on a par with the type of which "Every Inch a King" is an example. The plot, which purports to be an account of the adventures of a band of gentleman pirates, contemporaries of Sir Francis Drake, is thin, and, with the archaisms of style which are manifestly used to give the story an Elizabethan flavor, combine to produce a decidedly melodramatic effect. There seems to have been no attempt to transfer to the pages anything of the spirit of the times, though the opening gives promise of it.

The illustrations by F. C. Yohn are particularly well done; the artist has succeeded in transferring to the faces some hint of character.



"The Rainbow Chasers," by John H. Whitson, published by Little, Brown & Co., is a story of the plains, a Western story with what is, so far as we know, an entirely new coloring. We do not remember ever to have read in fiction any description of Arkansas lumber camps.

The author states that "dove-tailed facts, woven together and brodered with fiction, constitute no inconsiderable part of this book. The writer might add further concerning many of the things herein written, 'All of which I saw, and part of which I was'; . . .

"The life of Christine, more tragic

than even here recorded, was heard from one who knew. If Dick Brewster—a story must have its hero—did not do all the things with which he is credited, what matters it? He would have done them, for that was his way.

"The deep woods of Arkansas still feel the bite of the booming, whining, hungry saw. As for the plains, they are still there, wind-harried, miragy, sun-kissed, often sun-blistered and blizzard swept just as when the Rainbow Chasers hunted over them so wildly for the pot of gold."

If anyone is led by this foreword to read the book he will probably lay it aside only to return again to it.



"The Pastime of Eternity," by Beatrix Demarest Lloyd, Scribner's Sons, is the story of an extremely morbid lot of people. Taking into consideration the fact, however, that its chief actors are people who are afflicted—or blessed—with the peculiar disposition known as the artistic temperament, the results developed are not so surprising as they might otherwise be.

Oliver Holbein being the kind of man he was—musical, dreamy, introspective—and married to such a woman as Mrs. Holbein is described to be, it was not strange that he should surrender to the influences growing out of his intimacy with Lea Bésarique and Hulda, two women who seemed able to have some sort of sympathetic understanding of his peculiarities.

The Chevalier de Bésarique is a character that impresses one as being inspired with an unusual degree of natural nobility, in spite of the impatience that the reader is likely to feel at his wrong-headed family pride.

The author evidently has considerable knowledge and sympathetic comprehension of music and its effects, for the subject occupies a large portion of the story, and it is handled with a praiseworthy freedom from the sort of cant that characterizes so much of the art talk in fiction. Though the story is a shade

too bizarre for a healthy book, it is, nevertheless, absorbingly interesting.



A study in character is, perhaps, rather too pretentious a description to give Anne Warner's story, "A Woman's Will," Little, Brown & Co., yet there is little else to it than a very clever delineation of a more or less common phase of a German masculine type.

To an American who is not familiar with the eccentricities of the class of German men to which Von Ibn belongs, the naïve egoism, the dignified self-conceit, the indomitable sense of superiority, the easily-offended majesty and the sentimentalism which is so faithfully portrayed by Mrs. French will appear like the most extravagant caricature. But to anyone who has met and experienced the vagaries of this curious human being, the doings and sayings of Von Ibn will be excruciatingly funny.

The story is hardly more than a series of dialogues between Von Ibn, a German musician of unimpeachable family connections, and Rosina, a fascinating young American widow—rather frivolous, if the truth must be told, and somewhat willful—in the course of which a love story is developed to a happy conclusion. It is an entertaining summer story, and nothing more.



The story that begins and ends with a murder, the interval between being devoted to an account of the devices of a woman to seduce a priest, described thus baldly, suggests something sensational. It would be hardly fair, however, in a notice of "A Broken Rosary," by Edward Peple, published by John Lane, to stop with this; for the book has decided merits as to style, and the denouement redeems it from the charge of immorality. If it were not for these considerations, we should be inclined to condemn it as, at least, a decidedly unpleasant tale. It will be likely, however, to appeal to epicures who like their novels highly flavored.



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